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SIGHT AND SOUND

The International Film Quarterly

VOLUME 26 No. 4 SPRING 1957

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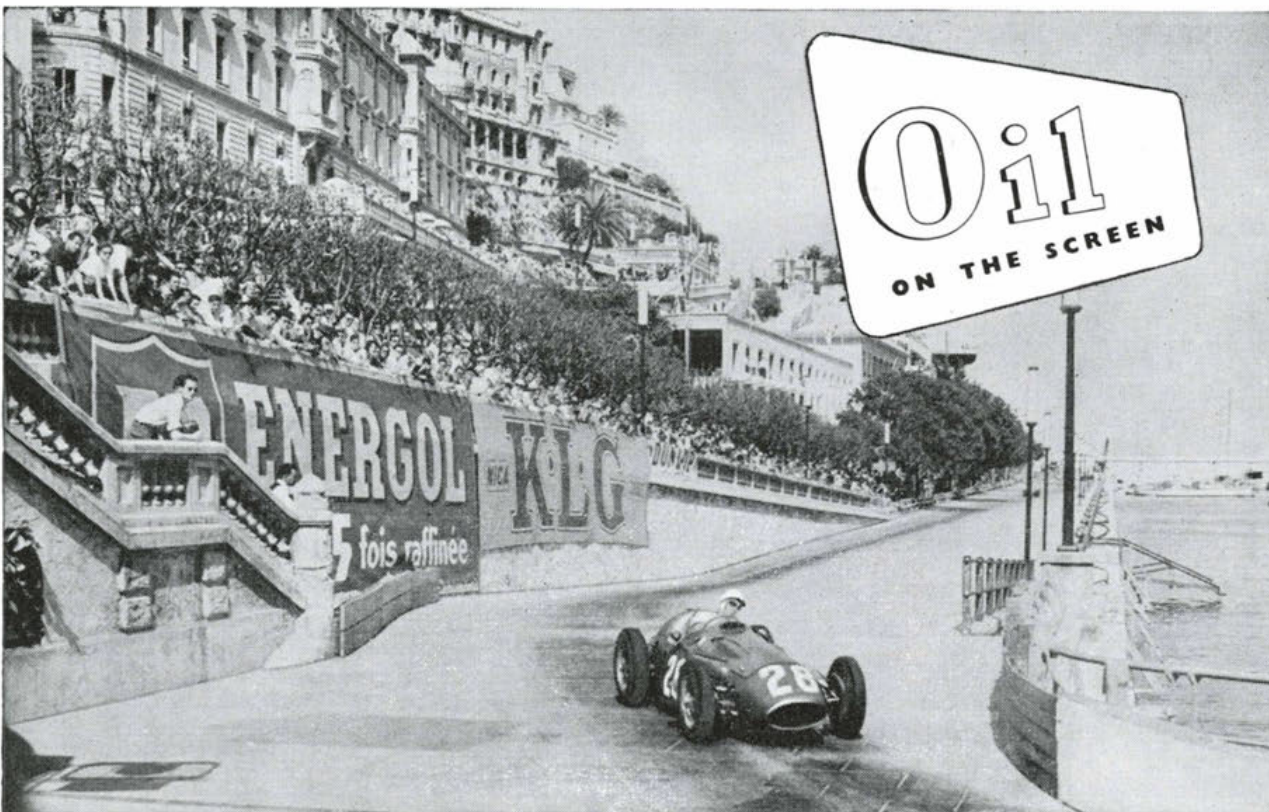
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"FORMULA 1 1956"

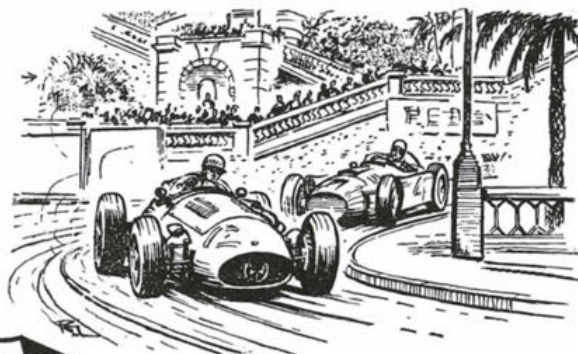
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THE FRONT PAGE

ANYONE buying a book is entitled to assume that the text as purchased tallies with the text as originally written. If the volume has been bound with a chapter missing, the customer can return it; if it is an abridged edition, any reputable publisher recognises an obligation to declare the fact. This sort of protection for the customer has never existed in the cinema, and for sufficiently obvious reasons. The release version of a film is not necessarily identical with the print originally shown to the Press; a foreign film may be sizeably cut before being presented to British audiences; and, more generally, a reissue may amount to a drastically abridged version of the original film. In no case will audiences be aware of the behind-the-scenes tinkering, unless they are unusually inquisitive or well-informed.

Quite apart from the savage mutilations that are bound increasingly to accompany the TV screening of pictures, we have recently had some striking examples of cutting in its various forms. On release, for instance, it was discovered that its extreme length was telling against the Judy Garland *A Star is Born*, and the distributors duly excised one of the picture's least expendable sequences, the "Born in a Trunk" number. The reason, presumably, was that a cut could be made here without disturbing plot continuity. More extreme is the recent cutting, for a reissue, of John Ford's *They Were Expendable*. The new version of the film sacrifices almost half-an-hour's running time, including many of the quieter and more reflective episodes. The result, inevitably, is to bring the film much closer to the conventional "action" war picture, to deprive it of its particular distinction.

Of continental films recently shown in London, one notes that *Gervaise* has lost almost ten minutes, and that *Chnouf*, *The Heroes are Tired* and *Scandal at Sorrento* are among films more heavily clipped. Some part of these cuts, but not necessarily all, represent censorship excisions, although some distributors now anticipate the censor by making their own cuts before the film is submitted to the B.B.F.C. All the same, it is worth noting that of the 521 features passed by the Board during 1956, a total of 274 were in fact cut.

Critics who may think that the continuity of a film is unusually jerky or abrupt, filmgoers catching a reissue at their local cinema and finding it disappointingly unlike the picture they remembered, are unlikely to go to the length of checking up to discover what is missing. It is because such a small proportion of the public either knows or cares about the way films are shown that the practice of cutting is so general. (For a comparison with the book public, one need only look at the recent outcry when a publisher issued one of Beatrix Potter's stories in a somewhat simplified form.) And, of course, there are usually what appear to be sound commercial reasons for clipping films. Reissues are frequently adjusted to fit a double feature programme. A foreign film may contain a song which is difficult to subtitle, or a dialogue scene which is thought to drag. Or, as in the case of *A Star is Born*, a brand-new film may simply be regarded as too long.

The custom, of course, is not confined to British distributors. As is mentioned elsewhere in this issue, Visconti's

La Terra Trema was brutally reshaped by its original Italian distributors, and the cut version, as with *They Were Expendable*, amounts to a different and inferior film. Another Visconti film, *Senso*, has been cut for mainly political reasons, while de Sica's *Oro di Napoli* (which has lost three of its six episodes in an English version), was also shown in Italy with one section missing. From America, we have the recent case of *The Dam Busters*, again cut with the object of tightening up the action. And Ford's *The Sun Shines Bright*, shown in Britain in a slightly abridged version, was reduced for release on its home ground to the proportions of a second feature.

It must of course be recognised that cutting, in a good many cases, does no particular damage. To be deprived of twenty minutes of *Scandal at Sorrento*, or six of *Love Me Tender*, is possibly no great hardship. And censor cuts are inevitable, however much we may regret the practice of cutting films from which children are already protected by the "X" certificate. But it is important to realise that there is a point of principle at issue, that the arbitrary decision to abridge a work of art, on grounds of commercial expediency, represents a degree of interference with the artist's original conception that would hardly be thought justifiable in any other field. At the conference of film makers held in Paris last summer, Jean Renoir (whose *French Cancan* was slightly cut for showing here) and Michael Cacoyannis (whose *Stella* was similarly shortened) both protested strongly against the practice. Warners have recently threatened legal action against any American cinema which may try to impose its own censorship on *Baby Doll*. Protests from artists, however, are bound to cut relatively little ice when the other factors involved are so complex.

Ultimately, we are again facing the old distinction between a film regarded as a work of art and a film regarded as a commercial property—and the fact that most films are *not* works of art does not of course simplify matters. Further evidence of the divergence between artistic and commercial interests comes through another point raised at the Paris conference: a protest against the continued habit of projecting films on screens other than those for which they were designed. Now that the wide screen has become almost standard equipment, it seems to be assumed that audiences would resent any return to the old three by four proportions. It would be interesting to know, however, whether the wide screen *per se* really holds an advantage with the public.

In any event, there are two actions that might conceivably be taken by the trade, both of which would greatly benefit the interested minority without noticeably injuring anyone else. The first is as far as possible to see that films are projected on the screens for which they were shot. The second is to ensure that, if films must be reissued in cut versions, this need not necessarily mean the virtual withdrawal from circulation of the uncut original. It is sad that a film like *They Were Expendable* should be cut; it would be tragic if the film were henceforth available in no other form.

The survey of Documentary in Britain, announced on this page in our last issue, has been postponed because of the writer's illness. It will appear in the Summer number of SIGHT AND SOUND.

In the Picture

Paris Notes

LOUIS MARCORELLES writes: Although the "big" French features are currently doing extremely well at the box-office in France, cinema managers generally admit that, taking production as a whole, Hollywood still holds its advantage. All the same, Hollywood's share in the French box-office takings, which last year amounted to 33.97 per cent of the total receipts, has fallen off considerably since 1949, when American films accounted for nearly 45 per cent of the box-office total. This development is the more significant in that French cinema attendance in 1956, with 410 million tickets sold, was the highest recorded since 1947.

There are several reasons for the French cinema's increased activity, which is undoubtedly bound up with an increase in prestige abroad. Insensibly, France seems to be regaining the position in the European cinema which the Italians took over in the post-war years. In France itself, cinemas are now being modernised, slowly but surely, and in many cases equipped with CinemaScope. The French industry has staked heavily on the wide screen, on CinemaScope and the like, and of a total of 129 French films and co-productions made during 1956, 42 are in a wide screen process and 57 in colour.

In spite of some initial doubts, co-production has proved one of the decisive factors in this new development of the French cinema. Through the pooling of French talents and resources with those of Italy, Germany or Spain, more and more elaborate and costly pictures are now reaching the cinemas. Many of the major directors have been able to operate only under these conditions: René Clair's *Les Belles de Nuit* and Jean Renoir's *French*

Cancan are no exception to the rule. At one time it was feared that national cinemas would lose their essentially national character. But a new ruling will henceforth allow co-productions to continue to benefit from tax reductions in each of the co-producing countries, even in cases where the film does not feature a leading player from the second country concerned.

The immediate result of the co-production system is that costs have in many cases been doubled. The disadvantage is that producers become increasingly reluctant to take financial chances; the advantage, that these lavish and expensive productions can now compete with Hollywood on its own ground. Although *Notre Dame de Paris* was made a good deal more cheaply than a picture like *The Robe*, it is a specifically continental production aimed at a world market and will be one of the first such films to gain circuit distribution in the United States. The new policy is unlikely to have much effect on Hollywood's hold over American audiences, but it may make serious inroads into its continental markets. Possibly in retaliation, Hollywood seems now to be going all out to acquire European talent. To take only France, one notes that two relatively new directors, Victor Vicas and Roger Vadim, have just signed Hollywood contracts. Brigitte Bardot, Martine Carol, Françoise Arnoul, Robert Lamoureux and Fernandel have all been approached or have already signed on for American pictures.

More interesting are the artistic consequences, direct or indirect, good or bad, of the French cinema's gradual assimilation of American methods. Like Hollywood, we run the risk of sacrificing the modest success to the super-production. To maintain their standing, directors like Clair or Renoir cannot now make pictures costing less than two or three hundred million francs. And the enormously rapid spread of CinemaScope and colour is likely to rule out the kind of enterprising little pictures made before the war, as well as the marvellously anarchistic atmosphere in which a director like Renoir developed. With the increasing "Americanisation" of France, however, and the parallel "European" movement which has led the different national industries to join forces, the cinema is bound to reflect social as well as economic trends.

One film seems particularly characteristic of this development: *Et Dieu créa la Femme*, written and directed by Roger Vadim and starring his wife, Brigitte Bardot. In elegant surroundings, and in the great expanse of CinemaScope, the film's young characters affirm a very American craving for luxury and frenzied living. On the other hand, Max Ophüls' *Lola Montes*, also in CinemaScope and possibly the most expensive production to date of the European cinema, shows that old-style continental polish is not yet wholly compatible with the large-scale production system. This over-ambitious film was made by Gamma Film, a Franco-German-Swiss firm which set out as though with the intention of immediately rivalling Fox or M-G-M. Starring Martine Carol, Peter Ustinov and Anton Walbrook, the film was aimed at an international market. But after completion a year ago, it was considered unsatisfactory and was sent off to the Hollywood cutting rooms, from which it has returned in an entirely re-edited version—cut by nearly half-an-hour, and narrated in the present, although the story is essentially made up of flashbacks in the *Citizen Kane* manner. Whatever one's opinion of the film, one cannot but protest at this vandalism. Meanwhile, Max Ophüls himself is in hospital at Hamburg, the victim of a heart attack (which, admittedly, preceded these happenings).

Association and Federation

Two important changes affecting the British Film Producers' Association were announced recently. Mr. A. T. L. Watkins has joined the B.F.P.A. as vice-president, his post as secretary of the British Board of Film Censors having been filled by Mr. John Nicholls. Apart from this alteration in personnel, the decision on the part of five of the forty companies comprising the B.F.P.A. to create an independent Federation of British Film Makers may have far-reaching results. The first members of the Federation are Ealing Films, Launder and Gilliat Productions, Charter Film Productions (John and Roy Boulting), Ivan Foxwell Productions and Warwick Films, with Lord Archibald as President.

Commenting on these developments, *The Times* quoted one of the Federation's members as saying that they "intend to obtain a more equitable deal for British film producers and to give them a greater chance of developing and expanding output". Although



"Funny Face": Audrey Hepburn and Fred Astaire in a scene from Stanley Donen's new musical about a model and a fashion photographer.

denying that there had been any dispute with the B.F.P.A.'s other influential members, including those representing distribution and exhibition interests, "some producers and companies have become increasingly convinced of the need for an organisation which could speak and make representations on their behalf to Government departments and other bodies. The new Federation will be composed of companies whose sole or main objective is the production of British films and their distribution throughout all available territories in the world".

Scandinavian Notes

ERIK ULRICHSEN writes: To celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in 1956, Nordisk Films Kompagni have published a book, *50 Aar i Dansk Film*, immensely valuable for its exhaustive index to Danish feature production. In addition the company marked its anniversary with a colour film about Greenland, *Qivitoq*, directed by Erik Balling. After the director's promising comedy *Adam og Eva* (1953), this conventional melodrama came as a sad disappointment.

Several new projects, however, sound more hopeful. Torben Anton Svendsen is to do an adaptation of Kjeld Abell's political murder drama of the 'thirties, *Anna Sophie Hedvig*, and Gabriel Axel has filmed another well-known Danish play in Knud Sønderby's *En Kvinde er Overflødig* (*A Woman too Many*), which deals with the clash between generations.

This year it is the Swedes' turn to celebrate; Svenska Biografteatern—which later became Svensk Filmindustri—was founded in 1907. The company's great period was, of course, the Sjöström-Stiller epoch, beginning with Sjöström's amazing *Ingeborg Holm* (1913); but it is still very much alive, and has reached almost the same international standard in the work of Alf Sjöberg and Ingmar Bergman. Of these two directors, Bergman's talent seems at present most vital. Sjöberg's *Vildfåglar* (*Wild Birds*), *Karin Mansdötter* and *Sista paret ut* (the title is the name of a children's game) were in different ways all weak. Bergman's *Sommarnattens leende* (*Smiles of a Summer's Night*) was not a success either, but at least Bergman had tried to make a new departure, even if it was into a field—comedy—to which his talents are not primarily suited.

Bergman's film for Svensk Filmindustri's fiftieth anniversary is *Det sjunde inseglet* (*The Seventh Seal*), awaited in Copenhagen with great interest. Based on a screenplay by the director himself, the film stars the comedian Nils Poppe, although it is not in fact a comedy. It is set in Sweden in 1350. A knight has returned from a Crusade, and meets Death at an inn in a country where the plague is spreading fear and misery. One guesses that the film will be reminiscent of Pabst (*Paracelsus*) and Dreyer. It is sometimes Bergman's fault to study the work of other directors too closely; none the less he is still the most daring and talented of the younger Scandinavian film-makers.

News from Budapest

LOUIS MARCORELLES writes: News is beginning to trickle through from Budapest concerning the fortunes of the Hungarian cinema during and after the October Revolution. On the evening of October 23, when the first demonstrations took place, teams of young men went out with their cameras to film the scenes in the streets. Later, nine groups from the feature studio of Gyarmat Utca, and a further ten from the Documentary Film studio, were reported to be in action throughout the country, following and recording the progress of the insurrection. Some filming continued even after the Russian intervention of November 4. But by that date political police had already visited Gyarmat Utca to recover the recorded material, while the Russians themselves took over operation of the Documentary studio.

During the rising, workers' committees were set up at the main studio, while the studio administrator, Imre Banyas, who was supposed to have resigned, continued at work. When the Kadar government restored Banyas to his post, he accepted only after consulting his co-workers. A considerable spirit of solidarity seems still to exist in the Hungarian industry. Four leaders of workers' committees, arrested by the Kadar government, were freed after intervention by the directors Zoltan Fabri and Karoly Makk. But a stiffening of political censorship must be feared, and there is likely to be a check on that movement towards greater freedom which began after the fall of the Rakosi government last July. Zoltan Fabri's *Mister Hannibal* and Zoltan Varkonyi's *The Bitter Truth*, the two films most characteristic of the new Hungarian cinema, have not as yet been seen by the Hungarian public.



Jacques Tati at work on his new comedy, "Mon Oncle".

Documentary at Mannheim

EGON LARSEN writes: The "Cultural and Documentary Film Week" at Mannheim, on the Rhine, will be held for the sixth time this year from May 27 to June 1. It is an annual event less widely known, at least in Britain, than it deserves; but then this is not a festival, not an occasion for the publicists and photographers. The business of showing films is taken very seriously; distractions are taboo. Film workers, educationalists, critics and youth leaders, attend regularly, as well as officials of the Federal and Lander governments and delegations from several countries which regard Mannheim as a shop-window for their shorts. The town of Mannheim is the host, with the Federal German Ministry of the Interior contributing towards the costs.

The quality of the programmes is of necessity varied. The Germans, although their one-feature cinema programmes allow time for shorts, last year showed rather poor stuff, though there was an experimental series which one hopes to see continued: *Jugend-psychologische* (juvenile-psychological) films for school use, designed to give children guidance in the forming of moral values. Lamorisse's *Le Ballon Rouge* was also shown, Henri Storck (who said that "Mannheim has become as important as Edinburgh") brought his latest piece, a clever publicity film on Ostend, and Haesaerts presented his *Fra Angelico*. The Russians showed some brilliant cartoons, as well as an outrageous item on astronomy which suggested that outer space belonged, by rights, to the Soviet Union. Hungary, Poland and East Germany were also among the seventeen countries represented and a total of 240 shorts were shown.

Britain's 1956 contribution was somewhat unrepresentative, consisting of some C.O.I. material, a children's short dubbed in German (and considered rather old-fashioned), and a semi-religious extravaganza by Hans Nieter O'Leary. But there is still time to supply material for this year: interest in Britain's documentary production is very great, and I think Mannheim is an international forum which should not be neglected.



"Out": Hungarian refugee at Traiskirchen.

A Note on OUT

The United Nations Department of Public Information produced *Out*, its study of the Hungarian refugee problem, in exactly five weeks. Filmed by Lionel Rogosin, director of *On the Bowery*, and scripted by John Hersey, it was shot on the Austro-Hungarian frontier and in the refugee camp at Traiskirchen. *Out* had its first American TV showing in mid-January and was shown on BBC television on February 13. THOROLD DICKINSON, chief of the United Nations Film Service, writes of the production:

On November 28, 1956, I was asked to organise a film to draw attention to the plight of the Hungarian refugees. 100,000 of them had crossed into Austria in the last few years and now they were crossing the border at the rate of more than a thousand a day: how soon after Christmas could the film be ready? At 3.00 p.m. on Friday, November 30, Lionel Rogosin and a U.N. staff cameraman, Gerald Gregoire, with U.N. production assistant William Lee Bard, flew by KLM from Idlewild with a Mitchell picture and sound camera, two hand cameras and several cans of negative film. John Hersey, accepting his first film job, agreed to follow them early in the next week. From their Munich branch, U.S. Information Services assigned a German sound engineer to join the unit in Vienna, and a U.N. staff member, summoned from Belgrade, arranged with a Viennese laboratory to process the negative daily. So the unit were able to screen their improvisations and build their film continuity from day to day. They had been briefed to the best of our ability before their hasty departure. We knew that they would have to think fast and work fast in a round trip that must take less than three weeks: New York-Vienna-New York.

It was ambitious to decide to do more than make the usual reportage of the situation, but that is what we did decide—to try to get under the skin of the refugee, to show the experience from the refugee's point of view, omitting the details best left to radio and the printed word and the newsreels. To show it objectively, without sentimentality.

At United Nations Headquarters, we pressed on with our other incessant work. Five other films in the cutting rooms; speeches in the General Assembly to be covered; a deal with the National Film Board of Canada to record the story of the U.N. Emergency Force in the Middle East. On alternate days, a U.N. radio unit talked back their despatches from Austria to New York over a

closed radio circuit, and we took this opportunity to discuss technical and story problems with members of our film unit. By means of a temporary service of diplomatic pouches, in spite of bad weather, cans of processed negative and positive film soon began to reach us.

Before Hersey arrived in Vienna, Rogosin had already covered escapes across the border by day and night, snatched between endless cold wet hours of vigilant waiting. Under such conditions, with the synch-sound camera, he recorded anecdotes told by a Swiss student to his companion as they squatted in the lee of a haystack.

The day after we had begun to cut this material experimentally, the film editor went down with mumps and I took over. We called in Alexander Hammid, Menotti's colleague on the film version of *The Medium*. With the first Rogosin-Hersey footage came a tentative script, a story-line about a small group of refugees; the dialogue was in English. On the screen we saw and heard snatches of talk done in the manner of *On the Bowery*. But all in Hungarian. An interpreter from the Hungarian Section of U.N. radio was called in to translate all the variants of dialogue, which changed with every shift of the camera.

The last of the footage reached us on December 22, and the four days of the Christmas holiday were spent in solid work. The unit returned exhausted and slept through the holidays, relieved that we could see a coherent film emerging from their efforts. Hammid and I worked in adjacent cutting rooms. We exchanged ideas, and pieces of film, and changes of tempo, and edited sections, and were almost ready for Hersey to begin writing narration and translations on December 26. We listened to tapes which had been recorded in Austria.

We found there was enough material for a musical accompaniment except for three short sections of the film. I telephoned Virgil Thomson: "Can you find a composer? We need five minutes of music by tomorrow night." Within an hour, Jan Meyerowitz was in touch with me, and by the following evening we had recorded on film five minutes of appropriate new music. Next day, December 29, Hersey's commentary was ready and we recorded the two Hungarians who spoke in English for the characters on the screen. On January 3, we mixed the final sound tracks with variants for Britain, Canada and the United States. (As a small example, in the British version the word *address* is spoken with the accent on the second syllable; in the others the accent is on the first syllable.)

On January 4 we showed ourselves and our families and friends the first print of *Out*, just thirty-five days after the unit left New York. As of the middle of February, a conservative estimate of the TV audiences in the ten countries already contracted is 25 million; and the movie audience is already considerable.



Lionel Rogosin (left) and John Hersey.



Hollywood in Europe: location filming in Spain on Stanley Kramer's "The Pride and the Passion".

Hollywood in the age of Television

by PENELOPE HOUSTON

"Why should people go out and pay to see bad pictures when they can stay at home and see them for nothing"—MR. SAMUEL GOLDWYN.

"While many expensive films flop, nevertheless a cheap film is never a smash hit financially"—THE ECONOMIST.

THE ancestral voices of Hollywood have lately been responsible for some glumly prophetic pronouncements, of which Mr. Goldwyn's, quoted at the head of this article, is among the most succinct and realistic. Between four and eight thousand of America's 19,000 cinemas, according to certain estimates, may have to shut down during the next few years; fewer pictures are recovering their production costs in the North American market; and an industry confronting the dual problem of rising costs and a declining home market has had to watch

television, the new leviathan, towering like one of the over-sized monsters of its own science fiction fantasies. "Movies", one slogan defiantly proclaims, "are still your best entertainment". But the problem for Hollywood is to convince the American public that this is in fact the case; and its methods—wider pictures, longer pictures, more colour, noisier sound—have substantially affected the whole business of film-making. The results are obvious enough: the particular pattern of cause and effect, the economic and industrial processes behind the apparent artistic change, are nonetheless worth investigating.

The most dramatically obvious moment of change came rather more than four years ago, with the decision to alter the size and dimensions of the screen. As with the earlier innovation of sound, this was a response not

to newly invented techniques but to business pressures. The three-panelled screen of Cinerama, the CinemaScope system devised by Professor Chrétien, were in no sense novelties. Hollywood, though, has long been one of the truly conservative communities, which prosper on the principle of resisting change until change becomes imperative. The impetus in this case, of course, was provided by television, and there is a beautiful logic in the decision that the best way to fight a small screen is to make your own screen that much larger. In any event, critics who found good aesthetic grounds for denouncing the "letter-box" screen, the destruction of intimacy, the sheer waste of space involved in staging a dialogue scene as though it were a boxing match, have long since conceded defeat. The larger screen won because it did succeed, for a while, in drawing the public.

Size was bound to exhaust its novelty value, however, as soon as every company began to make bigger pictures. The first two Cinerama programmes admittedly remain among the cinema's top ten money makers of all time, but this predictably proves the drawing power of the largest of all fairground attractions, the gigantic peepshow. Of the twenty top money makers of 1956, the pictures taking four million dollars or more in the North American market, *Variety* lists nine in CinemaScope and colour, four in VistaVision and colour, two in wide screen and colour, two (*The Rose Tattoo* and *The Proud and Profane*) in black-and-white VistaVision and a further three (*I'll Cry Tomorrow*, *The Man With the Golden Arm*, *The Bad Seed*) in old-fashioned wide screen black-and-white. If this looks like a victory for CinemaScope, it is worth noting that of the twenty films at

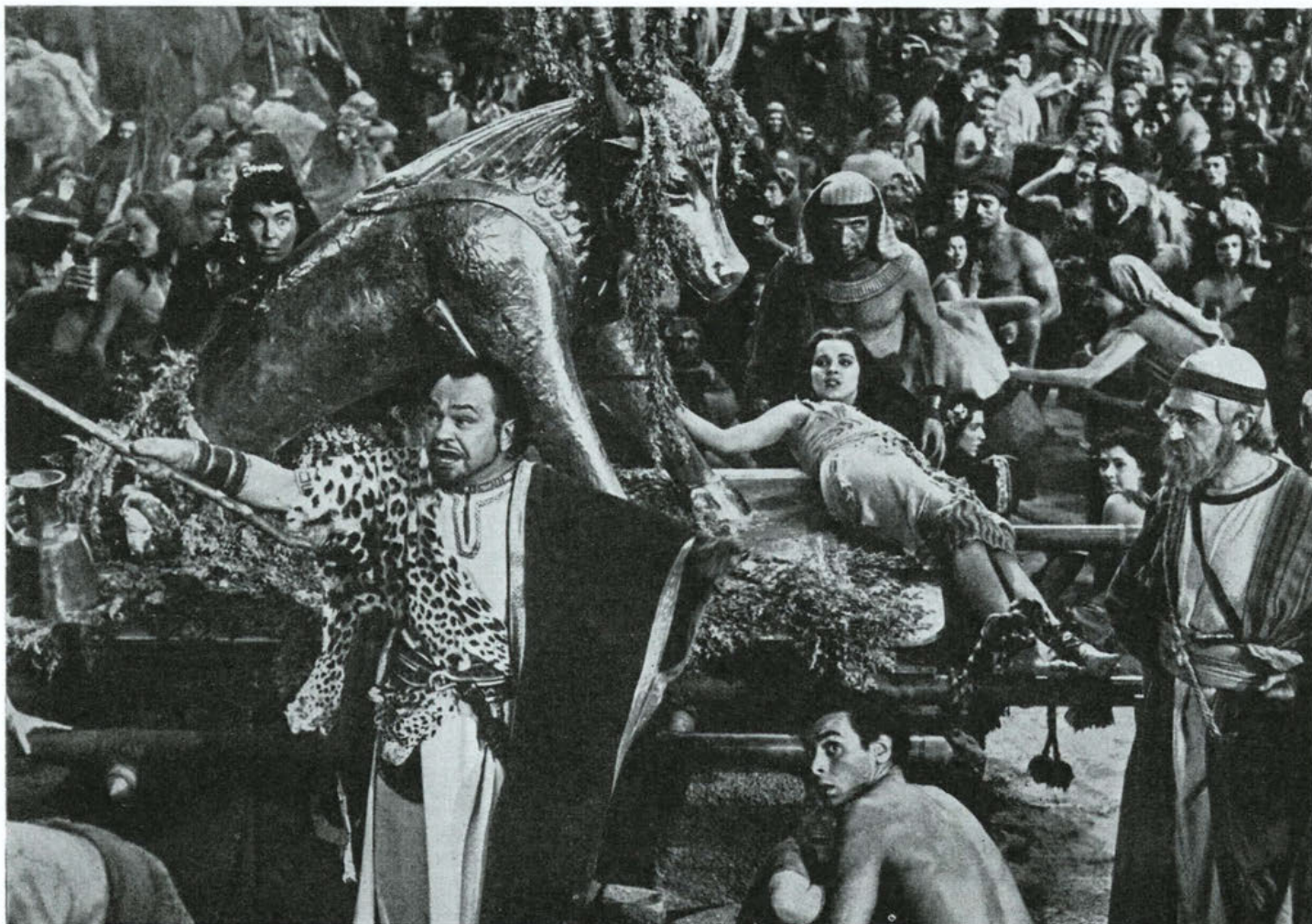
the bottom of *Variety's* best-seller list, pictures in the relatively humble million dollar bracket, a further ten are in CinemaScope and colour. The wide screen, in other words, may be a significant adjunct to a big film: it does not in itself make a film big. There is some recognition of this in 20th Century-Fox's recent decision to relax its ruling against black-and-white CinemaScope films, and itself to release a series of small-scale low-budget Westerns in a black-and-white CinemaScope process.

2

The large screen, in effect, was no more than a temporary money-catching solution to a long-term problem; and the problem itself can be defined in the coldest statistical terms. In 1946, at the end of the great wartime boom, cinema attendances in America averaged rather over 80 million a week. By 1955, in spite of population increases, they had fallen off to 46 million a week. In fact the total amount paid annually in cinema admissions, which reached its lowest point in 1952, recovered somewhat during the next two years with the help of increased ticket prices and then began another and perhaps more significant decline. There is further enlightenment in a *Motion Picture Almanac* table, based on Government statistics, which gives details of the money Americans spend on entertainment—a breakdown of the so-called "recreation dollar". Expenditure on almost every form of entertainment, including the living theatre, increased during the years 1952-54: the cinema, steadily though slowly, lost ground.

Television has been a convenient and inevitable scapegoat,

Orgy in the traditional style: worship of the Golden Calf in de Mille's "The Ten Commandments".



but the real answer seems to be that a tradition is gradually being broken, that one of this century's greatest habit-forming drugs is losing some of its power. Hollywood's revenue has always largely depended on its mass public. It has relied on the people who can be trusted simply to "go to the pictures", to turn out in their unquestioning millions for John Wayne or Martin and Lewis or Doris Day, to watch *On the Waterfront* and *Ma and Pa Kettle* with the same unflinching devotion. The floating audience, like the floating voter, must be lured and captivated: the mass audience, though its loyalties have fluctuated before, has been accepted almost as a matter of course, something to which Hollywood was quite simply entitled. Now that this attitude can no longer be maintained, Hollywood is searching for reasons. One explanation advanced by some American trade sources is that cinema building has not kept pace with the move out to the suburbs and that parents with young children may be reluctant to make the trek to the city cinema. The increase in the number of drive-ins—from 100 to 5,000 since 1946—certainly supports this argument in favour of cinema-going made easy; and drive-in cinemas now account for about 20% of the total American box-office takings.

There is more substantial evidence, though, that it is when life seems hardest and most drab that people most readily go to the pictures. The cinema is warm and moderately comfortable: it offers its ready-made dreams. The Depression years, the War, gave film-makers audiences starved for distraction. Advance the standard of living, and the power of the easy drug begins to wear off; put a television aerial on every roof, and the process will be rapidly accelerated. 1946 represented a kind of saturation point, and it is not in Hollywood's power to reproduce the conditions that gave it the unquestioning audience.

As the audience declines, so costs continue ominously to mount. The policy of cutting production, which reduced Hollywood's feature output by a third between 1951-55 (from 369 films to 241), imposes its own burden in increased studio overheads. Studios designed for a heavy and regular production schedule are left standing half-empty, while film-makers increasingly go overseas to take advantage of fashionable foreign locations and lower production costs. In any given week, there are now likely to be 20-odd pictures actually shooting in Hollywood and a further twenty, either Hollywood films or pictures in which American companies have a financial interest, shooting overseas.

The average cost of a feature production in 1955 has been estimated in the *Motion Picture Almanac* at \$900,000; and the increasing use of colour, the wide screen processes, the growing number of mammoth productions, will all serve to send up expenses. This relationship between production costs and American box-office takings is probably the most crucial aspect of Hollywood's whole somewhat precarious economy. Writing in *Variety*, Arthur Mayer has recently estimated that "two-thirds of our pictures are failing to return their negative costs in the States and Canada." This in itself reveals Hollywood as heavily dependent on its overseas markets, which in fact now account for roughly half its annual revenue. It is a dangerous dependence, though, because of the tariff barriers that may at any time be imposed, the government action that any country may take to benefit its own native production.

One further feature of Hollywood's position, in its most basic economic aspect, should also be mentioned. This is the development resulting from the celebrated "divorcement" ruling which in 1949 broke up the old vertical organisation of the major companies, separating theatre operation from the business of production and distribution. The consequences of divorcement have been double-edged. As in the book business, where the book-seller traditionally dies rich, the publisher well off and the writer poor, exhibition is customarily the most profitable branch of the film industry. But the major companies, no longer able to operate their own



Orgy in the contemporary style: rock'n'rollers in "Don't Knock the Rock".

theatres, cannot recoup here what they may risk in production.

A further consequence only becomes apparent at a time when Hollywood's instinct is to make fewer films and so concentrate its resources. The need of the exhibitors, for a steady flow of pictures to keep the theatres open, runs directly counter to this production policy. "What's so special about this mass market exhibitor that he should think his requirements should be specially catered to?" asks the belligerently realistic Mr. Goldwyn. "If 3,000-4,000 theatres must close, if only so many good houses can do good business with only good pictures, why aren't we showmen enough to recognise the facts of life?" The production side of the industry can face, with a moderate degree of calm, this prospect of fewer cinemas showing fewer films. They have, in fact, their own alternative market in television, and the TV-films battle has essentially crystallised into a struggle for markets—a straight fight between cinema exhibitors and the new medium which will so greedily take whatever Hollywood may greedily offer.

3

These are some of the basic factors in Hollywood's situation, a necessarily simplified version of a highly complex series of interlocking problems. Is the solution to return to a higher level of production, so satisfying the exhibitors, or to concentrate on the "blockbuster" productions like *Giant*, *Guys and Dolls* or *The Ten Commandments*; to continue to run a studio like an assembly-line, or to cede certain territories unconditionally to television and to conduct production operations not as a steady, deliberately planned campaign but rather as a series of crushing "blockbuster" raids on the box-office?

Just how costly film production has now become at its higher levels is difficult to discover, since estimates vary widely and sometimes bafflingly. The following figures,

mostly taken from *Variety*, give a rough indication:

- \$ 13,500,000: *The Ten Commandments*.
- \$ 6-7,000,000: *The King and I*, *War and Peace*, *Around the World in 80 Days*.
- \$ 5-6,000,000: *Giant*, *Moby Dick*.
- \$ 4-5,000,000: *Guys and Dolls*.

These figures remind us, with a certain sense of shock, that there was a time when a million pound picture rated as the extreme of reckless extravagance. They become more significant when one sees it estimated that it will probably be three years before *The Ten Commandments* recovers the \$21,000,000 that will enable it to break even. If there is one certain bet in show business, though, it must be that de Mille's picture will make money, and a thirteen million dollar investment can seldom have looked safer.

Films such as these, the proudly-named "blockbusters", represent the heaviest firing power in Hollywood's armoury. They are expensive to make and expensive to sell, since the initial investment must be protected by the most elaborate publicity campaign. Generally speaking (although *Around the World in 80 Days* is a remarkable exception) such formidable assignments will only be entrusted to veteran directors. Their main advantage from a box-office point of view is that these fantastically lengthy and costly pictures become the films that audiences feel they have to see. And the audience that is won back to the cinema for *Giant* may, so the argument goes, return next week for a film of more modest and conventional proportions. The "blockbuster" campaign is still in its early stages, but the increased box-office returns during the last months of 1956 suggest that it may be working. No one seems yet to have considered, though, the point at which audience saturation may set in. The housewife interrupting her shopping, the casual filmgoer looking for an evening's relaxation after a day's work, are being subjected to a pretty severe trial by celluloid.

The artistic hazards of the outsize policy present another and a different problem. Directors who used to tell a story trenchantly and dramatically in ninety minutes are falling into the trap of padding out much the same material with another half-hour of irrelevant footage. The expensive foreign locations are lengthily exploited; dialogue scenes, as in *Guys and Dolls* and *The King and I*, exhaustively fill the gaps between musical numbers; and a dramatic situation that would once have been indicated in a couple of shots now yields up its material for five minutes of static talk. The wide screen merely altered the shape of pictures: length, when it is allowed to become an end in itself, can be much more positively dangerous.

The "blockbusters" are designed to appeal to everyone. They break significantly through the barriers that once separated the "prestige" production (the kind of film that inflated a studio's pride, but at the cost of appealing only to a minority public) from the ordinary, workaday money-spinner. At the other end of the scale, Hollywood is mounting a heavy assault on that section of the audience on whom it can still most consistently count: the teenage public. *Rock Around the Clock*, possibly the most sensational box-office picture of 1956, was produced, again according to *Variety*, at a cost of about \$300,000. It is likely to recover this cost eight times over in the world market. Other films with equally evocative titles—*Rock, Rock, Rock*; *Don't Knock the Rock*; *Rock, Pretty Baby*—have been rushed into the cinemas to satisfy an insistent demand. The fact that in a year or two these pictures will have only a remote sociological interest is at present beside the point.

Science fiction, a mild revival of the horror film and a whole series of studies of more or less tormented adolescents, are also aimed directly at this market. It was the teenage audience that made *Rebel Without a Cause* one of the major box-office successes of last year, and it was this film that led to the posthumous cult of James Dean, the hysterical identi-

fication of a dead actor with the spirit of a generation. The unhappy adolescent, the science fiction monster, the heroic rock'n'roller: these are recurring symbols of the contemporary American cinema, and they are there because American teenagers will pay to see them.

There is another kind of production which represents more of a calculated risk, but which can also avoid the additional expenses of colour and the large screen. Two immensely successful pictures of last year were *I'll Cry Tomorrow* and *The Man with the Golden Arm*, respectively fifth and thirteenth on *Variety's* best-seller list. Both are carefully planned exercises in degradation and misery, screen versions of the "True Confessions" magazine story. They are aimed at a public whose taste has toughened and hardened, an audience which is prepared to take more and give less in the cause of entertainment. There is also Kazan's *Baby Doll*, a film which seems likely to make a good deal of money, and one providing a brilliant example of just how far, and in what direction, the audience may be taken. *Baby Doll* is spurious art, but a fine piece of contemporary showmanship.

4

Elia Kazan, whose professional reputation probably stands higher than that of any other Hollywood director, also has greater independence, more control over script and casting, than most other film-makers. He makes his pictures in New York or on location, for his own company, and this increasingly is becoming the pattern of American production. The great studio concerns, the Hollywood empires, are beginning to break up. Stars, directors and producers are engaging in independent production, using the facilities of the major studio, releasing through its organisation, but essentially making films on their own account. During the past year or so, Darryl Zanuck, Jerry Wald, Dore Schary and Don McGuire, former production executives at Fox, Columbia, M-G-M and Paramount, have all abdicated to go into independent production. Arthur Freed, who produced most of M-G-M's outstanding musicals during the past fifteen years, now heads his own independent organisation at the studio. Kirk Douglas, Jane Russell, James Mason, Clark Gable, Doris Day, Frank Sinatra, Burt Lancaster, and of course Marilyn Monroe, are among the players who have gone into independent production.

One reason for this move towards independence is that it is more profitable, from the point of view of taxation, to take a share in the profits than a fixed salary. But a more significant explanation is that the whole structure of the major studios was geared to a different type and level of production. Irving Thalberg exemplified the production chief who ruled the studio as a benevolent, all-seeing despot. It is Thalberg's own company, M-G-M, whose affairs have been made most public during a series of business crises which brought about the resignation of Arthur Loew, former chairman of the board of Loew's Inc., as well as that of Dore Schary. The stockholder group which challenged the existing board of Loew's Inc., claimed that this richest and most powerful of Hollywood companies was surrendering its position, that too many productions were losing money. M-G-M, like other companies, now functions to a certain extent as a centre for independent productions.

This increase of independence has its hazards. Actors backing their own pictures are inclined to give themselves opportunities for ill-judged self-display, and there is a particularly squalid and hysterical brand of film-making that seems to flourish beyond the respectable borders of the major studios. Theoretically, though, there should be a reasonable chance that films will become more daring and adventurous. And Hollywood could certainly afford a less restrictive policy. Returning to *Variety's* box-office list, one notes that only three of the top twenty money-makers were based on original screen stories. In fact, Hollywood last year made less use of original screen material than at any time

since the 'thirties. It is the best-selling novel, the Broadway hit, the musical remake of a film that did well in the past (*High Society*, *The Opposite Sex*) or the straight remake (*The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*) that seems increasingly to represent the safest investment.

Another direct consequence of the new style in production is perhaps worth mentioning. Hollywood's star system was not something that developed fortuitously. As long as a studio had a player under long term contract, it could afford to embark on the sustained publicity campaign needed to launch and maintain a reputation. Stars, in fact, were not made but built. But the building schedule has now been interrupted, and the actor runs some risk of gaining his independence at the cost of his career. Already, we are deep in the era of the stunt personality, the player who is only as good as his press agent. The decline of the film empires is opening the way to some fairly barbarian tactics.

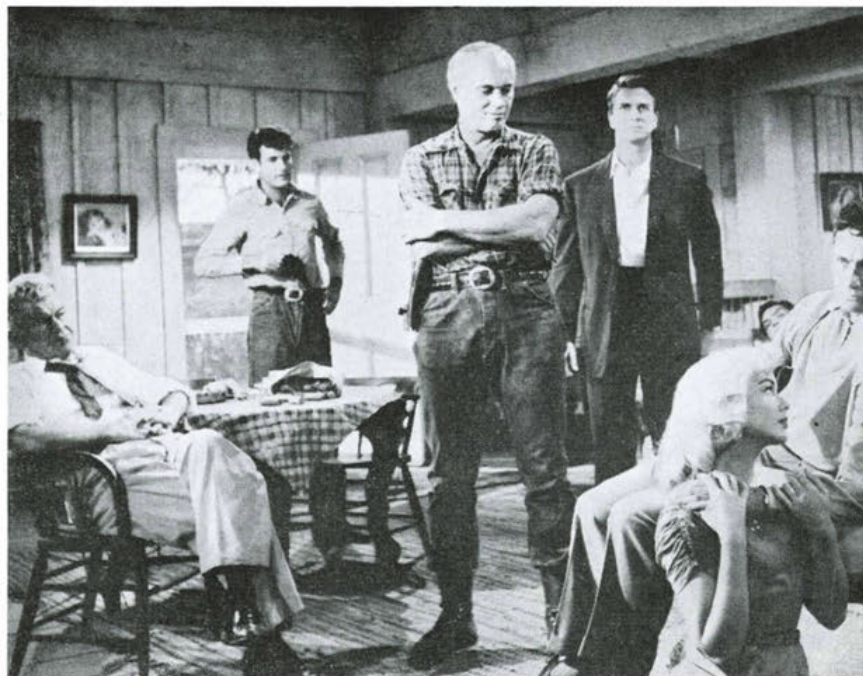
Just as the actor represented an investment, so it was worth the company's while to foster the talents of its young directors. Now that the "B" picture no longer serves as a training ground, studios are looking increasingly to television both for talent and material. Television originals like *Marty*, *Wedding Breakfast*, *The Rack*, *Patterns of Power* and *The Young Stranger* have been expanded for the screen and filmed in a number of cases by their original TV directors. These are all black-and-white pictures, made with fairly modest resources, and it seems mildly ironic that Hollywood should be turning to TV for the material that will help to keep the cinemas open to carry on their fight.

5

The final and inescapable element in Hollywood's present situation is television itself—the greatest potential market, the old enemy and the new accomplice. The film industry's initial attitude was simple enough: give nothing away, attack television in the cinemas by making films that TV could not hope to match. But the barricades began to go down in 1955, when Howard Hughes sold RKO-Radio to General Teleradio, a concern whose interest lay at least partly in making RKO's film backlog available to television. After this, the flood-gates opened. "In the past twelve months", wrote a *Motion Picture Herald* correspondent last January, "RKO-Radio, M-G-M, Warners, Columbia and 20th Century-Fox have set for distribution to TV—in one manner or another—approximately 2,630 features. . . The total number of ex-theatrical features now available to TV is estimated at somewhat higher than 10,000".

Profits from these operations have helped to carry the major companies through a difficult year. 20th Century-Fox, whose income is handsomely augmented via an oil strike on the studio lot, remains one of the most prosperous Hollywood organisations. Even so its president, Mr. Spyros Skouras, was quoted some months ago as saying that "without our television sales (plus the income from the laboratory and from foreign theatres) we would be in the red". And having once sold its pictures to TV, a company has shot its bolt. It also runs the risk of introducing still another form of counter-attraction to work against the interests of its own films. When *The Wizard of Oz*, one of the first M-G-M releases, had its TV screening at the end of last year, it attracted an audience estimated at the extraordinary figure of 40,000,000. (Or, ominously, only a few million less than an average week's cinema attendance). There must be quite a genuine risk that the new, glittering, outsize productions on show at the local cinemas may be quietly outflanked by the old-fashioned pictures shown in black-and-white on the small screen.

There is another aspect of Hollywood's relationship with TV, in the extent to which film companies are now themselves active in television production. Warners, Fox and M-G-M are among the companies making their own TV films, and Columbia is said to derive up to 10% of its revenue from the operations of its television subsidiary, Screen Gems.



Low budget suspense: a scene from "Hot Summer Night", a melodrama made with the accent on speed and economy by a former radio-TV team, Morton Fine and David Friedkin.

The amount of film stock used for TV production in Hollywood now considerably out-strips that used for actual film production, and there is every sign that these operations will increase.

Roughly speaking, Hollywood is engaged in defining spheres of influence. It has given to TV what it was bound in any case to take—the small-scale Western, the *I Love Lucy* brand of domestic comedy, the thriller series. It is taking from it in return the kind of material needed to fill the gaps in its own production schedules. If there is a return to "offbeat" film-making—and there are some signs of it—it seems likely that this will be achieved by way of TV. Finally, through the sale of its old pictures, Hollywood has caused a certain mild consternation in the production side of the television industry, which has had to meet this formidable competition. The sale, like Hollywood's move into TV production, was a recognition of the inevitable: television had become too strong to fight, but it may yet prove a valuable partner.

6

During the post-war years, Hollywood has ceased to be an expanding industry. It has made some more or less desperate efforts to recapture lost ground and the lost audience. It has sustained heavy losses in creative talent through the operations of the political inquisitions and the black list. It has developed excessive caution in its choice of screen material. With the recovery at the box-office towards the end of last year, however, there seems also to have been a revival of nerve. Fox has this year announced one of the most ambitious production schedules in its history, and intends to release pictures at a rate of one a week. Warners also has a large-scale production programme on hand. And upwards of 300 film projects have been announced recently by the independents.

All this suggests that Hollywood may be recovering its equilibrium now that it has finally come to terms with television. But if the battle is almost over, the scars remain. Whatever happens in the next few years, there can be no return to the fine, free confidence of the past, the days when a film—any film—could still make its direct and simple appeal as "your best entertainment".

Replies to a QUESTIONNAIRE

KINGSLEY AMIS
JOHN BERGER
SPIKE MILLIGAN
IRIS MURDOCH
JOHN OSBORNE
PETER RAWLINSON, M.P.
KENNETH TYNAN
JOHN WAIN
COLIN WILSON

SIGHT AND SOUND has published few more controversial articles than Lindsay Anderson's "Stand Up! Stand Up!" The points it made, and some of the Press comments it has received, raise issues that go considerably beyond the boundaries of film criticism. Notably, the article was concerned with the social relevance of the arts and with the general critical attitude in this country at present, the mood of post-Bloomsbury "liberalism." The main purpose of this Questionnaire is to sound out some opinions of our contemporaries on these matters. We also hoped somewhat to break through the barriers that tend to

isolate the various arts, and in particular to separate art from politics. We have had little response, though, from the politicians and political journalists we approached, and we are particularly grateful to Mr. Peter Rawlinson, M.P. as the sole representative of the political viewpoint. We have deliberately addressed this questionnaire to people whose main professional concern is not with the cinema: otherwise, we have sought—and received—as wide a range of opinion as possible. And we would like here to record our sincere thanks to all those who have contributed towards this feature.

1. To what extent do you think the artist can ignore the social conditions of his time? If the influence of society on art is increasing, do you think that the influence of art on society may in fact be diminishing?

PETER RAWLINSON: The artist should ignore the social conditions of his time, ignore society and fashion and manners and create what he is driven to create out of the fire within him and with the talents he has developed. The playwright, I suppose, cannot ignore social conditions, or speech, or mood. But he and the cinema producer are primarily exchanging entertainment for a box-office ticket. I cannot quite equate the painter or the poet or even the musician with the playwright and the film producer.

JOHN BERGER: No artist can ignore the social conditions of his time. He can only believe that he does, but his need to believe this is as much a result of those conditions as is the commitment of the opposite kind of artist. Verlaine was as much influenced by his society as, say, Zola. But the artist who is conscious of this

influence is more likely to be in full control of the possibilities of his art than the artist who is not. The process of art influencing society and society influencing art is a dialectical one. In times of social or ideological crisis the process becomes more obvious and more urgent. I would say the present is such a time—so long as the word "art" does not imply quality, but is simply meant to cover all the ways in which myths, and the values they imply, are got across to the people at large. The fact that the process is in its results a negative one at the moment—society making art escapist and art encouraging escapism in society—does not make it any less real.

COLIN WILSON: The artist ignores the social conditions of his time at his own peril. For my part, I believe that every serious modern writer should be well grounded with Toynbee's *Study of History* and Spengler's *Decline of the West*. Art has never exercised any great influence on society, but I do not believe its influence is diminishing; on the contrary, I feel that the film is a medium of greater promise than any art of the past.

KENNETH TYNAN: Artists *can*, of course, ignore whatever they like: if they are Cocteau, they can ignore everything except other artists and still make good art. But Cocteau is an exceptional product of an exceptional society. The rule is that story-tellers (I assume we're talking of the narrative arts) must never lose sight of the way in which their contemporaries think and feel and earn and eat and work. Their audience is also their raw material. Art that turns its back on life is uncivilised in the exact meaning of the word. Whether the artist should have a fixed political attitude depends entirely on his ability to prevent it from impairing his vision. If it excludes pity and irony I should say it was evil; if not, not.

SPIKE MILLIGAN: If the artist is a purist, he can ignore social conditions completely. If he is hell-bent on impressing society, then he must become secondary to his art.

The second part of this question disturbs me, as I presume by art you are only including such things as painting, music, poetry, etc. This is, of course, the completely incorrect value of the word art. A well dug hole in the ground is better art than an ill-made violin. I do not know who cooked up the second part of this question, but I think they ought to be shot. The influence of society on real art is always nil, because real art is a subjective creation and therefore remains the property of its creator. If the artist is influenced by society, it is usually the beginning of a decadence, as was the voluptuous Alexandrian style of sculpture. Likewise, the influence of art on society is always very minute. Society is only interested in itself, and as such each cycle of society is insular and dies within its own boundaries during usually a brief span of life.

JOHN WAIN: Every serious artist is to some extent engaged in tackling the problems that beset the society he finds himself living in. Often, his contribution is that he can define and isolate those problems . . .

IRIS MURDOCH: Exactly how an artist relates to his society is something which may be unclear at the time, or at any rate be judged in retrospect when he is seen as the "spokesman" or "forerunner" of this or that. The artists of the 'twenties and 'thirties now seem to us to emerge naturally from that scene, whereas artists now feel misfits in the present scene, and so on. The moral of this is that artists, within their relation to their own work, ought not to bother too much about "the social conditions of their time". There is something they ought to bother about, which is *reality*—but where an artist looks to find this is a matter for the individual. This is not to say that one may not lament in a general way the lack of certain kinds of art to meet certain kinds of social need. I suppose it is true that the influence of art on society is diminishing; and perhaps this should be understood as a challenge to the artists. But the challenge should be answered not by anxious glances towards the whole social scene but by a deeper and more imaginative concentration upon whatever it is really *concerns* the individual artist.

KINGSLEY AMIS: There is obviously a sense in which he can, and a sense in which he cannot. I suspect that this "can" ought really to be an "ought". I personally would rather have an artist who has something to say about social conditions, but what he says and how much

he says are his own affair and cannot be otherwise. In any case, "artist" is confusingly general: painters, architects, composers, etc. can only dabble in social conditions either very crudely or very remotely.

It's a big "if". The question seems to me too vague to be satisfactorily answerable, and it would be a hard job to find any real evidence either way. What is this "society"? If it can mean "people's ways of life", then I should have thought it possible, at least, that "art" (if this can mean mostly disagreeable art in the shape of rock 'n' roll, certain styles of dress, etc.) is increasingly associated with people's ways of life. Whether it has any actual "influence" on them, I don't believe anyone knows enough to say.

JOHN OSBORNE: If you don't like people, you can contract out of it in several popular ways. Art for you is something that goes on between you and God, or—assuming that in most cases these are two different personalities—between you and yourself. Hardly anybody tries to make art out of madonnas or unemployed men because they are symbols that no longer have any meaning. Admittedly, you don't have to be a Catholic to enjoy Gregorian Chant—but how many people do? People respond to Graham Greene, not because they have any taste for blood and nails, but because he is a craftsman with a good eye and ear. What are the "social conditions of our time" but the way people live, feel and react? You can't separate the way a man talks, makes love and treats his wife from the way he feels about, say, the Royal Family, homosexuals and Suez. It is the same man. Of course, there is always a snob minority public for fine feelings about libations, and weird literary Noahs, building little artistic arks against the great Rising Flood of the Masses. They're welcome to queue up Two by Two, and go floating over the rest of us, surrounded by their treasures, as far as I'm concerned. There's very little art in Britain for society to influence. Novels reflect something of what's going on, I suppose, theatre hardly anything, and films nothing.

2. Lenin said: "For us, the cinema is the most important of the arts". *The Observer's* "Sayings of the Year" quoted the Countess of Harewood: "The cinema is the Arabian Nights of the modern age, the universal bedtime story". To which of these statements are you personally most sympathetic? Do you believe that the future lies with the mass communication media (TV, cinema)?

JOHN BERGER: The first. The second statement is an accurate enough description of how the cinema has been degraded and corrupted, but I strongly object to it because it accepts and dresses up in fancy language this degradation instead of protesting against it. The mass media are important because they are *mass* media. Thus, they are the immediate vehicles for effective communication. But I do not believe they will ever finally destroy the importance of the other media—the drama, the novel, sculpture or painting.

COLIN WILSON: Why not both? I go to a film to relax, usually. I ask no more than that it should be fairly adult, and not represent human beings as acting out of over-simplified motives. I do not mind how great a

strain on the credulity the action imposes, so long as the psychology of the film is realistic and—preferably—subtle. I see a science fiction or detective film with as much willingness as a *Battleship Potemkin*. But because the film means—mainly—a bedtime story to me, this does not imply that I do not agree with Lenin's comment. There is no contradiction. Music can range from the symphony and string quartet to Bix Beiderbecke and Louis Armstrong, and I personally listen to all of these with pleasure.

I wouldn't go so far as to say that "the future lies with TV", etc., but I certainly intend to utilise it myself in getting over what I have to say. Shaw said he would have written for radio if he had been born fifty years later.

KENNETH TYNAN: Lenin every time—as long as enlightenment doesn't preclude enlivenment. I don't think the future lies with any one medium. It lies where it always did, with groups of vivid and gifted and impassioned people who can impose themselves on any medium and make it their weapon. But there's a paradox about mass media. They enable the artist to button-hole millions of strangers; yet at the same time he feels so far removed from his audience that he tends to lose all sense of identity with it. To preserve that sense, without loss of self-hood, is the big mid-century problem.

IRIS MURDOCH: I sympathise with Lenin; clearly the cinema is an art, though not the most important one. When Lenin said it was, he doubtless had in mind its capacity to reach a wide audience—and the demand that art be "readily accessible", made by publishers and even critics, can be rather dangerous.

I am not enough of a sociologist to know whether the future lies with television etc. I hope not. Though I suppose one must remember that technical progress may make TV a more worthy medium for art. The difficulty is more complex, however. The notion that a work of art must also be "entertaining" is increasingly taken as axiomatic; this is not immediately fatal to films and novels which can fairly easily be "good" and popular. But one fears that as ever easier and simpler forms of entertainment become available the small sustained effort required by the novel and the film may become too much. . . . One can only hope (referring oneself to some optimistic theory of human nature) that good artists will continually compel attention by the merit and authority of their work. I would rather pin my hope to that than to systematic and self-conscious attempts by writers, etc., to "meet social needs".

KINGSLEY AMIS: I can't quite see what Lenin is doing here. If I am being asked to decide whether I want films to be political propaganda or visual bread-and-milk, then clearly I reject both choices. If I am being asked whether I think the cinema currently offers art or pap, then clearly it offers both. If I am being asked which it ought to offer, then I

suppose it must offer art. "Important" is a special difficulty. In Lenin's case, it means presumably "efficiently propagandist". I wouldn't know about that. If we take it to mean "aesthetically important" then for me the cinema can never be the most important of the arts. It may be for other people. I wouldn't know about that either.

I assume I am being asked, in the second part of the question, if I think the "mass communication media" will drive out, or diminish the importance of, the older-established arts. No, I do not think so.

JOHN WAIN: "Cinema" could be anything, just as "a book" could be anything. Obviously the mass-produced film is a powerful anodyne, equally obviously an imaginative and original film is, like any artistic achievement, something that makes for richness of life—and as a preliminary it may make people more disgruntled with their everyday routines. There is room inside this set of alternatives for Lenin, the Countess of Harewood and anyone else.

JOHN OSBORNE: The immediate future *must* lie with the mass media. Hating the mob may make you feel civilised and superior, but if you go on feeding it dead meat, there's the danger that it may one day turn round and bite you. It's all very well to play at literary cross-word puzzles in the weeklies, proving how clever and well-read you are, talking about the Influence of the Novel, but the fact is that there won't be any novels, and you may be out of a nice soft job pretty soon if you don't get down to some thinking about the Influence of Sabrina or This is Your Quiz Show and, what's more, finding and doing something better. Again, an artist who doesn't like people, or doesn't like Most People, is in for a pretty hard time. The sitting-room and the cinema are the places where people do their feeling, and this is where you have to get to them. You've got *them*, you are both living in Britain halfway through the 20th Century, and if you've got any talent you should find a way of making them respond to what you want to say. Heaven knows it's difficult enough to do, but, unless what you really want is to address yourself to 15th Century Italy (in which case you can paint madonnas and wear nails in your trousers, and hope someone will notice) your job is pretty clear.

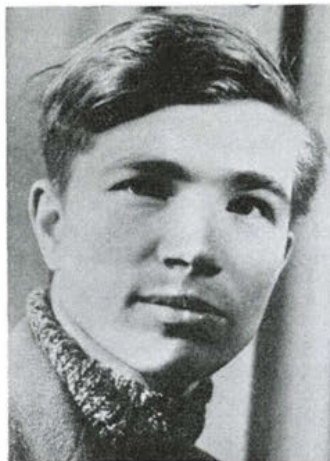
PETER RAWLINSON: I agree with Lady Harewood. I go to the cinema as a relief and relaxation from my everyday pursuits (the Bar and Politics), which involve reasonable intellectual effort and application. I want to be entertained, and I want to be removed into a world of fantasy or of history which I can best and most easily enter through the doors of a dark, deep cinema.

SPIKE MILLIGAN: Anybody for tennis? As to the Countess of Harewood saying the cinema is the Arabian Nights of the modern age, the universal bedtime story, I think I might correct her by saying it is usually the universal bedroom story with an "X" certificate, and the nights need not necessarily be Arabian. You see I have disagreed with both Lenin and the Countess of Harewood. A good idea must always give way to a better one.

Undoubtedly the survival of the cinema does depend on the masses. It is at the moment doing this, but at the cost of bringing all (or nearly all) communication to a very low level. The cinema today literally has become part of the Red gospel: i.e. a morphia for the masses. At present the cinema is used primarily as a base for financial gain and profit irrespective of all else. Sex is exploited to its maximum. As such, the whole medium will gradually become prostituted in the extreme. We can only hope that one day some cinema mogul might be fined for soliciting in celluloid. If I sound angry, it is because (and I believe that thinking people will agree) a great art form's aesthetic prospect is being ignored.



Kingsley Amis (second from right) talking with John and Roy Boulting, Ian Carmichael and Sharon Acker on the set of "Lucky Jim".



Left to right: Spike Milligan, Iris Murdoch, Colin Wilson, John Wain.

3. Do you regard Marilyn Monroe and James Dean as significant symbols of the 1950's?

PETER RAWLINSON: No.

JOHN BERGER: They are as significant as they are depressing. They represent a trend that would crown the jackal instead of the lion as king of the jungle: the jungle being our present kind of society.

JOHN WAIN: Monroe: no, except as illustrating changes in sex-fashions. Dean: yes, in a not very interesting way.

KENNETH TYNAN: They are two of roughly two thousand symbols, ranging from Dizzy Gillespie to Albert Schweitzer, O.M. The Dean and Monroe cults represent a retreat, on the part of people at large, to emotional immaturity. Monroe is the infinitely malleable animal, helpless, unlicked and baby-dollish . . . Certainly she doesn't symbolise Glamour in the knock-down Dietrich sense of the word: on the contrary, she projects an almost infantile submissiveness. If hers is a passive irresponsibility, Dean's was active. His fans like him best when he is behaving most unaccountably—snickering, wriggling, apparently sending up script, director and cast alike, twitching authority's beard and getting away with it. Quite apart from their talents, in both cases considerable, Dean and Monroe appear to their publics as invulnerable squirrels in a jungle world (cf. the bears-and-squirrels routine in *Look Back in Anger*).

KINGSLEY AMIS: Well yes, but no more significant than Sir Anthony Eden or Colin Wilson or Johnnie Ray or Gilbert Harding or Frank Tyson or Lady Docker or 101 other people. I suppose Monroe and Dean play a bigger part in some lives than some of the others do. But whether or not that makes them "significant symbols" I'm not sure.

SPIKE MILLIGAN: Miss Monroe's appeal lies in mass appeal—an attraction of the mammary in full flood. In that respect she is a symbol of the 'fifties. Contribution to the cinema as an art form—nil. James Dean: here I think we had somebody from the "method" school who, had he lived, might have combined the brooding technique of this school with the more classical approach of the British stage. It is difficult to say, but I do think his death terminated what seemed at the outset a bright prospect in the cinema world.

COLIN WILSON: Significant of what? I suppose Rudolph Valentino was a significant symbol of the 'twenties; but then so were *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses*. Figures like Dean, Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, only interest me because they give me an idea of the state of mind of the age I am addressing. Dean seems more significant than the others, because he was a half-baked outsider.

JOHN OSBORNE: They personalise the inadequacies and dissatisfactions of millions, just like Jesus and the Queen. I should have thought that was significant.

4. Are you personally interested in working for or in the cinema or television? Might you be interested if conditions were different?

SPIKE MILLIGAN: Yes.

KINGSLEY AMIS: No. I very much doubt it.

KENNETH TYNAN: I have been working as script editor for Ealing Films and am no stranger to TV. Anyone concerned with one of the narrative arts is sooner or later concerned with all of them.

JOHN WAIN: Yes; yes.

JOHN BERGER: For the sake of working for them under the present set-up—No. For the sake of using them to say something—Yes, very interested.

PETER RAWLINSON: Of course. I was brought up in the atmosphere of film-making. I should love to have a million dollars and make a film, a Colossal film, of John Buchan's *Midwinter*.

JOHN OSBORNE: I should love to have a part in film-making, if the conditions were right and I could work with people who shared certain common assumptions. Principal of these being: those who make films are as responsible to the people who buy their product as the chemist who markets drugs. If the product is impure, the people will suffer. TV interests me less because, although the problems are more complex and more far-reaching, they are less interesting to a writer—to me, anyway. Television seems to combine all the disadvantages of film and theatre.

IRIS MURDOCH: I have not especially considered working in the cinema. I feel positive dislike of TV. I would be interested "if conditions were different" in the sense that I should love to direct a film. But as things are, the cinema is a vast expertise in itself, and one might as well want to conduct the London Philharmonic. I think, leaving myself out, that in a happier state of affairs the techniques of cinema and wireless would be in much closer contact with ordinary people and ordinary artists. Schoolchildren ought to be making films and experimenting with sound and visual effects. These techniques ought to be our familiar play-things. As it is, they belong (the cinema at least) in an immensely remote and expensive dreamland. Change in this quarter (our relation to our techniques) is certainly worth working for, and might produce revolutions in the art concerned.

COLIN WILSON: Most certainly. It has always been my ambition to produce my own films one day, and I shall take the first opportunity to move into the film world—perhaps when a novel of mine is filmed. So far I have not published any, and the one I am about to publish is about a homosexual sadist and unlikely to get past the censors as a film—so I may have to bide my time.



Kenneth Tynan.



Photo by Julie Hamilton.
John Osborne.

5. Do you think that there should be a further degree of state subsidy for the arts in Britain?

KENNETH TYNAN: There had better be. I'm counting on the next (Labour) government to make good its promise to build a National Theatre. The people don't want one, I know: but, as Shaw said, they didn't want a National Gallery: yet they got one, and came, after a time, to be obscurely proud of it. Subsidised theatres in the provinces must surely follow. A political system that provides fruitful work for its citizens has a corollary duty to provide fruitful leisure—i.e. art.

KINGSLEY AMIS: On the whole, no. I can't see how you can get away from him who pays the piper calling the tune, and the State is the most potentially wicked of all piper-payers.

JOHN OSBORNE: Of course. If you're a socialist, you know the argument already. If you're not, you are building your ark, or making a pair of painful trousers for yourself.

PETER RAWLINSON: Yes, but like all politicians' yesses, a qualified yes.

IRIS MURDOCH: Yes. And not just for travelling exhibitions, but for introducing people to actual techniques of creation.

JOHN BERGER: Yes, as first aid. But the arts are not going to flourish until the whole national economy is radically changed: until education is taken seriously (critical test: payment of teachers); until there is a school of modern architecture creating modern towns and modern housing conditions on a large and generous scale: until we no longer have any fear of H-extinction: until James Dean and Marilyn Monroe cease to be significant symbols.

JOHN WAIN: For the cinema, yes. For writing, no. For music and painting, I don't know.

COLIN WILSON: I do. Sibelius was pensioned by the Finnish government fifty years ago, on the strength of no more than a couple of works. If the British government could be induced to pension me on the strength of *The Outsider*, I have no doubt that I could produce as impressive a body of work as Sibelius. As it is, I may be doomed to ragbag journalism or writing pot-boilers. Even Russia takes care of its writers and composers better than the lazy and unenterprising West.

6. Would you agree that the present tone in critical writing, particularly on the so-called popular arts, often tends to devalue and patronise the art it professes to serve? Do you believe (cf. "Stand Up! Stand Up!") in "committed criticism"?

SPIKE MILLIGAN: Yes.

PETER RAWLINSON: No. I think much criticism from that of Hazlitt to Agate to the critics of the present day is often nauseatingly pretentious.

JOHN BERGER: "Stand Up! Stand Up!" was one of the most encouraging articles I have read for years. In fact, there is no such thing as uncommitted criticism. There is criticism (inevitably committed to a greater or lesser degree) and there is gossip—either social or aesthetic. What great critic has ever been uncommitted—has not been concerned with relating the art he's dealing with to the life of his time and with criticising that life alongside its art?

JOHN OSBORNE: It's straight from the Ark—the one I mentioned before. The reviews of Mr. Anderson's article—or most of them—were like a pastiche of present-day criticism. This sort of thing: "they (critics' commitments) may not be flaunted but they are visibly there between the lines, where surely they belong, rather than in any self-assertive conspicuousness" (*Manchester Guardian*). "Self-assertive conspicuousness"! How magnificent, how decent, how English! Or this from *The Observer*: "Is there any downright wrongness in being happy?" This makes your opponent look a gloomy sort of idiot right away. "Surely the real escapists are the people who go about the world preoccupied with the search for sorrow; vigilant in the prosecution of social and political evils undoubtedly;" (a few marks for your vigilant prosecution, etc., but wait for the pay-off) "but blind to the great tracts of goodness in the human soul". If that doesn't make Mr. Anderson go and wash his mouth out, nothing will. Most of this criticism is waffling and dishonest. It is bad prose and bad criticism because the trick is to leave you a little discreet, gentlemanly doubt about what the reviewer really feels, so that you can think this is balanced, sober stuff, rich and nutritious. But it's just Brown Windsor, a strong stew-up of waffling vaguery and pedantry without any bones or the stock of humanity.

KENNETH TYNAN: But committed, as I suppose everyone will say, to what? To politics—to religion? Cardinal Spellman, as a film critic, is about as committed as you can get. Does commitment mean that one must admire a shoddily-made movie as long as its content is right-thinking? This is obviously nonsense: in all art, *what* is being said is inevitably modified (and often invalidated) by *how* it is being said. This applies to critics as well as film-makers. Style is not showmanship (is Lindsay Anderson mad?): it is the precise mould of thought. If the critic expresses himself well enough, the reader will soon be aware of the assumptions that underlie his preferences. I myself like social plays, instinctively mistrust "good taste" in art, suspect that verse drama is dead, and am hotly prejudiced against all new plays that state or imply Tory attitudes to class, race—or anything else. I am in fact committed to myself, which is much harder (and lonelier) than being committed to any creed. The trouble with most popular criticism is that it's committed only to the prejudices of a majority of its readers. You can spot it on sight by the use of words like "horrid" and "nasty" to describe realistic art; and by the use of sentences and constructions like: "It's a tough, uncompromising piece of work, *but* worth seeing". Why "but" instead of "and"? Take that man's pen away!

IRIS MURDOCH: I certainly dislike criticism of (for example) the cinema which fails to take it seriously as an art. And I believe in committed criticism in the sense that a critic should be serious and should engage his whole person with his subject and see it in relation to what things he regards as important. . . . On the other hand, commitment should not lead the critic to use his column simply for the pursuit and slaughter of his own *bêtes noires*. That criticism should be, also, *informative* is a good disciplinary idea.

COLIN WILSON: I never read contemporary criticism, except an occasional book on some writer I admire especially, so cannot say. Certainly the biography of our day tends to be:

in the hands of stupid and conceited fools who take advantage of their "detachment" to criticise better men . . . Lytton Strachey started a particularly stupid and pernicious fashion. JOHN WAIN: The first part of the question seems aimed at film critics, and is probably justified. As for the second part, I do not think a man has the right to set up as a 'critic' of anything that does not lead directly to his most serious pre-occupations. e.g., I am a critic of literature because, without literature, I should find the world meaningless. A film critic ought to be a man who is conscious all the time of the debt he, personally, owes to the cinema. This will make him all the more savage on bad films, and all the more demanding in his comments on good ones. But he will still not be a good critic unless he remains detached enough to be impartial: i.e., to remember that the important thing about a film is not what he thinks about it, but what it is.

KINGSLEY AMIS: Yes, very strongly, to the first part of the question. The simpering "tweeness" of, especially, highbrow TV critics makes me want to go out and attack someone.

Of course. It astonishes and depresses me that Lindsay Anderson (whose article I thoroughly endorse) should have had to kick up that fuss at all. In literature, for instance, his approach is taken for granted. A fine fool a critic would look if he confined his discussion of a writer like D. H. Lawrence to things like "characterisation" and "tempo", without giving an exposition of Lawrence's ideas, doctrines and so on *together with a moral and social evaluation of them*. The critic cannot help being a moralist (and moral ideas are no more "personal" or subjective than any others: they can be intelligibly and profitably debated and that is enough). The "uncommitted" critic is a mere compiler of programme notes. He encourages that formal pedantry which, in terms of the cinema, exalts documentary (that most frigid and trivial of all modes) and the "visually interesting". In such conditions the work of a director like John Huston, which is at its most characteristic at its most irresponsible, self-centred and affected, can pass as profound, and tedious, posing rubbish like *Bad Day at Black Rock* becomes a triumph of "atmosphere".

7. What recent films have you found particularly stimulating?

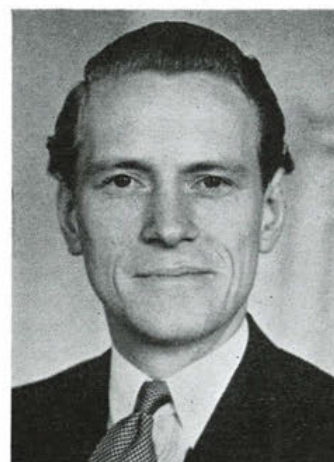
KINGSLEY AMIS: None very recent, for I have a television set. But I enjoyed *Rebel Without a Cause*, *Les Diaboliques*, *The Quatermass Xperiment*.

JOHN BERGER: *Gervaise*, *Moby Dick*—visually; *Le Sang des Bêtes*, *La Terra Trema*.

SPIKE MILLIGAN: I cannot say that I have been to many films recently, having been driven out of the theatre by the new giant stereophonic schizophrenic sound system. That and



John Berger.



Peter Rawlinson, M.P.

audiences which now seem to consist of nothing but people who spend the entire film explaining to the deaf person next to them what it is all about, or jeering at intimate love scenes. Therefore I have confined my visits to small cinemas. I saw, for the third time, Arne Sucksdorff's *The Great Adventure*, which gave me a feeling that there might still be hope for the cinema. The love and patience lavished on this film was obvious in every foot of it. *Richard III*—just missing greatness. *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday* I saw again. This succeeds in the comedy field purely on its inventive matter and the choice of slightly larger than life characters—a technique almost forgotten since Chaplin's early comedies.

JOHN OSBORNE: An astonishing number from Hollywood, a few from the Continent, none from Britain. (Assuming you mean feature films.)

PETER RAWLINSON: *The Searchers*, *Moby Dick*, *The Red Balloon*, *Baby Doll*—and almost every film in which the heroes are white, the villains red and the United States cavalry get there in time!

KENNETH TYNAN: *Umberto D.*, *I Vitelloni*, *Salaire de la Peur*, *Giant*, *The Killing*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, *Death of a Cyclist*: and, to prove prejudice, I confidently expect to be stimulated by Robert Bresson's *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé*. No comedies, but only because there haven't been any good ones lately.

JOHN WAIN: *Bad Day at Black Rock*.

COLIN WILSON: None since *Odd Man Out*—but have seen many excellent and thoroughly enjoyable films: *Rommel*, *The Searchers*, the Russian *Saltanat*. Standards of Westerns and detective films particularly good, I thought.

KINGSLEY AMIS. Novelist (*Lucky Jim*, *That Uncertain Feeling*), poet, literary and jazz critic. Lecturer in English at University College, Swansea since 1949. Born 1922.

JOHN BERGER. Writer and art critic. Contributor to the *New Statesman* and *Nation*, etc.

SPIKE MILLIGAN. Scriptwriter and performer in the Goon Show and other radio and TV programmes (*Crazy People*; *Seacombe's Here*, etc.) Has been draughtsman, salesman and band musician. Born 1918.

IRIS MURDOCH. Novelist (*Under the Net*, *The Flight from the Enchanter*); fellow and tutor in philosophy at St. Anne's College, Oxford, since 1948. Born 1919.

JOHN OSBORNE. Playwright (*Look Back in Anger*, *The Entertainer*) and actor. Born 1930.

PETER RAWLINSON. Barrister-at-Law; Conservative Member of Parliament for Epsom since 1955. Born 1919.

KENNETH TYNAN. Writer (*He that Plays the King*, *Bull Fever*, etc.), journalist and theatre and TV producer. Theatre critic for *The Observer*, also script editor for Ealing Films. Born 1927.

JOHN WAIN. Novelist (*Living in the Present*, *Hurry on Down*), poet and critic. Lecturer in English Literature at Reading University since 1947. Born 1925.

COLIN WILSON. Writer (*The Outsider*), contributor to various newspapers. Born 1932.



FRANJU

Photograph by Richard Lusby

by CYNTHIA GRENIER

THE man who is probably France's greatest documentary film-maker is a small, tremendously energetic and profane Breton named Georges Franju. Aged 43, Franju has eleven films and nine years of film work behind him. As his films all bear the mark of a strong and highly individual character, it is worth submitting the Franju personality to some study before passing on to his films and techniques.

The biographical details are simple and few. Born in Brittany into an upper-class bourgeois family, young Franju managed to stand at the bottom of all his classes until he left school at the age of sixteen. Two years earlier he had discovered Freud, Sade, Baudelaire and Bergson, whose works he virtually devoured with the kind of total energy that he is capable of projecting on to anything which attracts his interest. He worked at odd jobs until he was twenty, when he came to Paris and developed an interest in set design and theatrical decor. He did his two years military service in Tunisia, one of the rare times in his life when he set foot outside the continental limits of France.

In 1936, together with Henri Langlois, Franju founded the Cinémathèque Française, and began an association with the cinema which turned him from archivist to creator. In 1945, after the War, he left the Cinémathèque to become secretary general of the Institut Cinématographique Scientifique, founded by Jean Painlevé, only leaving that organisation in 1953 when it became apparent that he would be a full-time motion picture director.

Franju's is an aggressive, violent—even sadistic—personality controlled by a web of ethical considerations and dominated by a deep concern for human social problems and man in society. It is the tension between these two strong forces that creates the energy behind his work and provides it with its singular character. His film *Hôtel des Invalides* and his attitude to war give an excellent example of this. He is horrified by war and condemns it unequivocally and without reservation, and yet it is perfectly obvious that the violence and the very horror of it exercise a profound fascination over his mind. This even extends to all things military, and Franju can talk for hours about trench warfare, uniforms, the First Battle of the Marne, Big Bertha—the frame of reference still being, as with most Frenchmen, *La Guerre de '14*. In several thousand well-chosen words he can succinctly fail to prove that the First World War was really a much greater war than the Second.

He himself is very typical of a certain brand of French liberal intellectual: anti-clerical, anti-capitalist, anti-conformist. Filled with a hatred of the bourgeoisie—despite, or perhaps because of, being a product of such a class—he feels a deep sympathy with the working man, the underdog. As Franju himself puts it, "Je suis pour le chien, le saumon". Concomitant with this sympathy for the lower orders is a kind of romantic pessimism, best summed up perhaps by the Carné-Prévert films, *Le Jour se Lève* and *Quai des Brumes*; by Vigo's *L'Atalante* and almost all of Prévert's verses. This spirit, strong in Franju, prevails also among most of his fellow documentarists: Rouquier, Mennegoz, Bellon, Fabiani.

The violence of Franju's social personality is sublimated into aggressive bohemianism and impulsive condemnations of people and ideas. He was once ordered out of the Comédie Française for saying "merde" while in conversation with one of the directors. This led to his making a film on the Théâtre National Populaire rather than the sacrosanct Comédie Française. He is a relentless talker, irrational, proceeding with vast energy along his own lines of thought, and having



Maria Casarès as Lady Macbeth

little concern for the ideas of others. He is a proclaimed internationalist and condemns nationalism, particularly French nationalism *à la* Claudel, but is French to the marrow of his bones, can't understand a word of any foreign language; and is Francocentric to the point that life-experiences which take place in foreign cultures seem not to achieve much reality in his mind. Nonetheless he is an intensive observer of people themselves. He is a gifted mime, an excellent raconteur, and has enormous charm when he is not riding one of his hobbyhorses.

Like many other powerful creative artists, Franju does not have a widely catholic, "universal" appreciation of a great variety of styles (even in the cinema), and does not particularly "keep up" with the work of all the leading directors. But the films he *does* get, he really devours: *Strike*, *Potemkin*, *October*, *The General Line*, *The Blue Angel*. De Sica passes unnoticed as being too sweet, and the Americans as well for having too many insincere stories, including *Citizen Kane*. This, however, might merely be in reaction against the usual French adulation of Orson Welles.

2

Coming to a study of Franju's films, one can make a few general remarks which hold true for all his work. Without exception, his pictures are marked by this tension between violence controlled by ethical considerations and a concern for the evils of society. His films all bear the mark of great

plastic beauty, and an almost flawlessly acute sense of film rhythm. Witness such moments as the flight of the doves in *Hôtel des Invalides*, or metal workers whipping about lengths of molten steel in *En Passant par la Lorraine*, in which the internal movement of the images and the rhythm of the passages are sustained with the most precise sense of timing.

Like Flaherty, everything in the film for Franju must come from the story, from the material. The difference is that with Franju the subject is not the Rousseau-ish man, but man in society, man in the modern, urban, industrial world. With the exceptions of *Monsieur et Madame Curie*, *Poussières*, *Navigation Marchande* and *A Propos d'une Rivière*, Franju has picked all the subjects for his own films and has written the scenario and commentary for virtually all. Even with those films where the subjects were given him, he has managed to transform and reshape the material until there is little resemblance between his finished product and the original assignment. *Poussières*, for example, commissioned by the Institut National de Sécurité, was supposed to demonstrate a new safety device—a kind of gargantuan vacuum cleaner—for factory use; Franju, however, turned the material into a fascinating history of dust and man's struggle with it. Treated with surface coldness, the film is a protest against the wretched working conditions in industries where there is still so often no protection against industrial dust. One can feel his distress over the skilled polisher of Limoges china or the glassblower

of Lorraine threatened in their work by the invisible dust particles which eat away their lungs.

3

Franju has the special and highly useful gift of being able to conceive the finished film down to the smallest detail before he comes near a camera. *Sang des Bêtes*, his first film, made when he was 34, had long been a favourite scheme of his, and he succeeded in so overwhelming a producer with his ideas in a verbal onslaught that the man agreed to back him. Franju, who up to that time had never been in a film studio, let alone behind a camera, went home, sat down and proceeded to write the scenario and draw, frame by frame, the story of *Sang des Bêtes*. Next morning he presented the completed shooting script, drawings, commentary and calculated footage of the film to the astonished producer. The money was given him. Franju rounded up a crew, went out in mid-winter, shot the film in about two weeks, and cut it himself (having never before been in a cutting-room). The finished product resembled the scenario and drawings down to every detail—with one exception—and to the precise footage. The one improvised detail was the splendidly sadistic irony of the butcher singing Trenet's *La Mer* as the slaughterhouse floor runs with a sea of blood. The butcher actually sang the song, and Franju naturally enough could not resist including it.

The sense of horrification and fascination with his subject is certainly true of *Sang des Bêtes*. Here he does not condemn. He is no vegetarian. He calls slaughterhouse butchering, "ce dur métier que des hommes font pour manger, et pour que les autres mangent". He defends it. On the other hand, he fully realises the sickening brutality that is necessary in this *dur métier*, and refuses to have it shrouded in a delicate

darkness. He wants people to know what men must do on the slaughterhouse floor in order for them to have steak on their table and leather for their shoes. The film, which cost approximately £5,000 to make, inevitably received no commercial distribution because of its subject matter. Through its circulation by ciné clubs, however, it has made more than double its production cost. The picture established Franju as a film-maker, and as something of an *enfant terrible*.

Franju's second film, *En Passant par la Lorraine*, produced by the Monnet Plan and dealing with the richness of Lorraine, was forced to develop as something of a travelogue on this particular province of France. Seldom, however, have factories and machinery been filmed so eloquently. The open-hearth furnace and the coils of white-hot steel are like some strange demoniac forces. The power and great energy of such industries are communicated with exceptional vividness.

Franju followed *En Passant par la Lorraine* by what is probably not only his finest film, but what may well be the greatest film made in France since the end of the war, bar none. *Hôtel des Invalides* has a powerful humanitarian message presented with enormous formal beauty and a savage wit. Commissioned by the Cultural Section of the Quai d'Orsay, the film and Franju were responsible for a small war between the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Fine Arts, which was waged for months and finally culminated in the Army's succeeding in blocking the showing of the 160 copies of the film in French embassies throughout the world, as being unfavourable to the Invalides. Ultimately the Ministry of War had a preface added to the film, stating that it was concerned only with the historical aspect of the Invalides and not with the social welfare work carried on by the Hospital. Despite the fears of the Ministry of War and the intentions of Franju, many veterans' groups of the First World War have wept on seeing the film, and Franju gleefully cherishes an ode written to him by the director of the Belgian equivalent of the Invalides for his service to the glory of French arms. The film sealed his reputation as a director, but led the Quai d'Orsay to be somewhat apprehensive about assigning him to subjects where he might be able to exercise his iconoclastic talents.

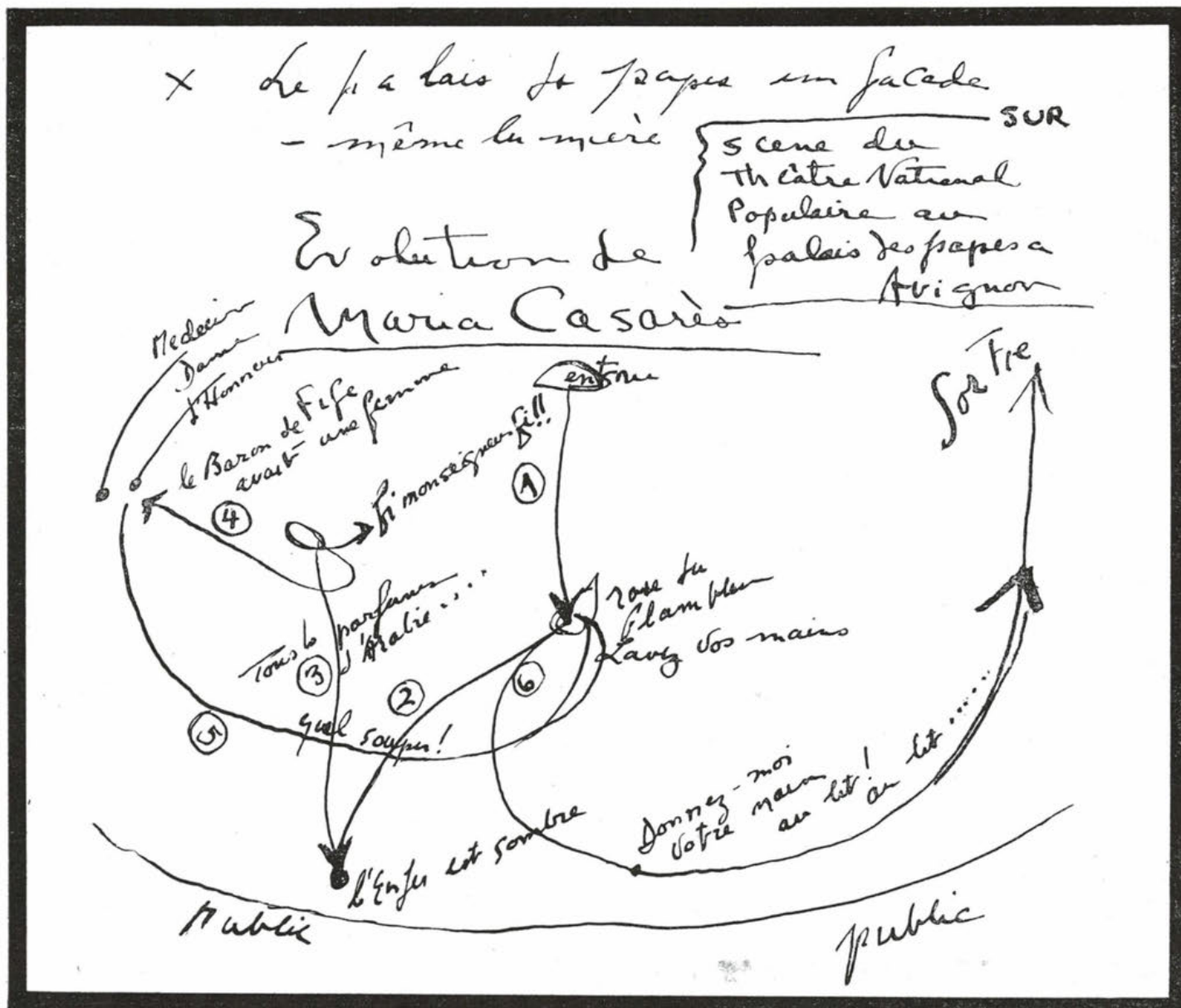
His next two films, consequently, were rather uneventful: *Le Grand Méliès*, a simple and touching account of the life of George Méliès, founder of the French imaginative cinema; and *Monsieur et Madame Curie*, an honest reconstruction of the couple's early days done as a pilot project for what was to have been an American series of TV films on great scientists.

The subject-matter of *Poussières* lent itself, as mentioned earlier, to more interesting cinematographic treatment, and allowed Franju to develop the problem of "la condition humaine". He then made a film, *Navigation Marchande*, from which he has since completely disassociated his name after difficulties with the producer over the cutting of the picture. This is a source of considerable bitterness for Franju, since he feels a tremendous attraction for the sea, rivers, harbours and barges. Nearly every film he has made bears what is almost his trade-mark: a shot of a heavily-laden barge floating down a river.

A Propos d'une Rivière, commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture, was intended to arouse French public interest in the preservation of the salmon. When Franju arrived on the



Franju (facing camera) and Jean Vilar during the making of the film on the Théâtre National Populaire. Franju is wincing at the continual noise in the Palais de Chaillot which prevented him from shooting. Photograph by Richard Lusby.



south-west coast of France, however, he discovered that but one salmon remained to be preserved. So, characteristically, he altered the material in such a way that the film revolved about this solitary salmon. As a film, however, it is one of the least interesting he has made, falling somewhere between a folk tale and a realistic account.

With *Mon Chien*, his film on the gassing to death of stray dogs at the city pound of Paris, Franju again found material to his taste. As in *Sang des Bêtes*, he here wants people to see and know what "inhuman" things are carried out in their name, in this case not even for food, but merely for the smoother and more orderly functioning of a great modern metropolis. Since only about 5,000 dogs a year are exterminated in France (nothing to compare with the massive numbers of sheep and cattle passing through the slaughterhouses), Franju was accused by the Board of Censors of going a bit out of his way to dig up this subject, and the film has yet to go out on release. It is true that it gives some evidence of a Zolaesque search for the sordid and gruesome, as well as a taste for the horrible that is pretty much Franju's own. He does, however, stop short of showing the dogs in their death agony. He said that he could not bear to be present at the scene, let alone

Above: Franju's sketch showing Maria Casarès' movements during the sleep-walking scene. Below: a script extract from the scene.

- 73— ENS. R: *Le médecin et la dame d'honneur.*
MEDECIN: Que fait-elle donc maintenant?
- 74— ENS: *Lady Macbeth, de face, pose son flambeau et se frotte les mains. Amorces dos de la dame d'honneur et du médecin*
MEDECIN (off): Regardez, elle frotte ses mains.
DAME D'HON. (off): C'est chez elle une action habituelle, de paraître ainsi se laver les mains. Je l'ai vue continuer ainsi pendant un quart d'heure.
TRAVELLING: *sur Lady Macbeth jusqu'en P.A. Les amorces sont sorties du champ.*
LADY M: La tache existe toujours.
MEDICIN (off): Ecoutez, elle parle, je vais noter ce qu'elle dira et fortifierai de la sorte ma mémoire.
LADY M: Disparais, tache maudite! Disparais, dis-je! Un, deux, allons, il est temps d'agir. Mais non, l'enfer n'est pas noir,—fi! mon seigneur, fi! un soldat avoir peur! Qu'avons nous à craindre qu'on le sache, quand personne ne peut appeler notre pouvoir en témoignage? Qui aurait pensé cependant que le vieillard contenait tant de sang?

shoot it: "Animals you eat are one thing, but dogs are men's friends. The day we eat dogs I'll shoot the scene". Nonetheless, the film, though not one of his outstanding achievements, is marked principally, and profitably, by that tension between a violent nature and an ethical mind that is Franju's special strength and talent.

As an interesting sidelight, it is worth noting that almost all his films, with the exception of *Sang des Bêtes*, have been shown with enormously popular films, and so have been seen by a much wider public than the documentary film-maker can generally expect.

4

Franju's three most recent films have been made almost simultaneously. He began the film on the Théâtre National Populaire first, and on location in Avignon found himself with a crew of twenty and ten days to wait between performances of *Macbeth*. As inactivity makes Franju acutely wretched, he soon called Paris, lined up a producer, and in ten days had completed a one reel CinemaScope film on Avignon. The film is light—"quand meme", says Franju, "on n'est pas tout le temps sérieux"—and beautifully composed from the point of view of the wide screen.

While he was cutting the film on the TNP, he was asked by the Ministry of Fine Arts to make a film on Notre Dame de Paris. "We don't trust you, Franju", they told him. "Just film the cathedral. No priests. No services. Just architecture". Although Franju yearned and plotted to disguise his second cameraman as a young priest hearing confession or giving communion on the last day of shooting, so that it would make no difference "s'ils nous foutent dehors", he was forced by circumstances to be circumspect. The resulting ten-minute film shows Paris in CinemaScope compositions of dazzling beauty. Franju divides the picture into three time periods: first, Notre Dame on a sunny autumn day; second, the towers, the view of Paris, the gargoyles that perch like malevolent spirits over the city, and a walk through the cathedral itself; third, up again to the towers with the snow



falling over Paris, and fade-out on a barge drifting slowly by the cathedral with bright sun on the snow. This short film shows possibly the best use to date of CinemaScope.

Like the film on Notre Dame, Franju's account of the Théâtre National Populaire is divided into three parts. At no time did he want simply to record a theatrical presentation; on the contrary, he wanted to produce a kind of theatrical-film. The first third of the picture is devoted to a rehearsal of *Don Juan* directed by Jean Vilar, which dissolves to a TNP performance in one of the poor industrial suburbs of Paris, with a view of backstage life which in turn dissolves to Avignon. Here we have the most interesting section of the film, with Franju directing Maria Casarès as Lady Macbeth in the sleep-walking scene. He plotted out with her the movements across the vast open stage, and the scene was shot in three and a half hours between the end of the regular performance of the play and dawn next morning. Until this time, Franju had never worked with professional players, with the exception of Nicole Stéphane who played Madame Curie. The results with Casarès are very exciting and promising, and he himself found the experience intensely rewarding and is eager to go on to make his first feature.

5

Exactly how he may react to the handling of fiction, feature film material, is not precisely clear. For the first time, he will be confronting material in which the *suite d'images* is suggested not by certain flat statements of literal fact, but by the poetic correlatives of the characters and story; and material, too, in which much of the substructure is essentially literary and not visual, in which the words that people say to one another carry a great deal of the burden. He has plans at present for two features. One is *Thomas l'Imposteur*, from the novel by Cocteau. The reader will not be surprised that this is a war novel (1914-1918), and a great part of the content is—still unsurprisingly—militantly and sometimes satirically pacifist and anti-war. Cocteau himself has given Franju a carte blanche, saying, "I know no matter what you do with it, you will succeed in overwhelming me".

The second of Franju's projects is the filming of *Fantomas*, the story of a French master criminal of the Belle Epoque period. As a boy, Franju used to devour the famous pulp horror series, running to some 32 volumes. This, too, obviously gives him some appetising possibilities. But in this film, says Franju, with crime itself as the material, he will be subtle: "Clouzot cogne. Il ne faut pas cogner. Il faut tordre"—"Clouzot tries to punch a man's head off. That's not the way. You should twist it off".

Before leaving the documentary film and testing himself with the future, Franju is gleeful about the potentialities of his next film subject: The Académie Française. The next year, though, should tell whether Franju will step from the ranks of the great documentarists into those of the great feature directors. The odds seem strongly in favour of his making that step successfully.

"A Propos d'une Rivière".



Filming the mood play: Julie Harris, Ethel Waters and Brandon de Wilde in "The Member of the Wedding".

The Empty Streets

RICHARD ROUD

THE MEMBER OF THE WEDDING has been acclaimed by many people as an example of the film at its best—serious, subtle and sensitive. It has been admired by the intellectual critics and also by those who "don't generally like films". Now I believe that a good case can be made for *Member of the Wedding*, but only in so far as it gives us a faithfully preserved play—that is, a record for the future or for those who have not seen the stage production. Examples of the preserved play abound in the British and American cinema—*The Importance of Being Earnest* or *The Women*, for example. However, some of those who admire this film have not been content to make any such minor claim for it: they take it as a sign of the "coming of age" of the American cinema.

In any case, the recent reappearance of Fred Zinnemann's film at the Everyman, and the current production of the play at the Royal Court Theatre, brings to the fore again the whole problem of the transfer of plays to the screen. In my opinion,

Member of the Wedding is far from being a perfect film, and I would like to try to analyse what I think to be its limitations, especially as I also feel that in it are contained most of the shortcomings that may attend the translation of a stage play to the screen. Some other recent filmed plays will be considered in so far as they share or avoid these limitations.

I

Among the critics who have admired *Member of the Wedding* is Miss Pauline Kael, a sometime contributor to *SIGHT AND SOUND* and to *Partisan Review*. In a recent article entitled "Movies, the Desperate Art" (*Modern Writing*, Number 3), Miss Kael discusses the American cinema, or, more exactly, what she thinks to be wrong with the American cinema. After discussing "Size" (naturally), she comes to "Action", the demand for which has, she believes, spoilt many American pictures, and also affected their chances of

critical success. "The critics' admiration for 'action' and 'the chase'", she claims, "leads them to praise sleazy suspense films, but to fret over whether *A Streetcar Named Desire* or *The Member of the Wedding* is really 'cinematic'". According to *Time* magazine, she says, *Member of the Wedding* "comes most vibrantly alive when it foresakes the one-stage original and, untrammelled by high-flown talk, roves through the neighbourhood; e.g. Frankie's journey through blaring, glaring honky-tonk town". Miss Kael insists, however, that the real drama was in the "high-flown talk", and goes on to chastise critics who object to films with a "markedly verbal content" even when the words are worth listening to. Her real fury, however, is reserved for the "villains", those who should know better than the ignorant masses: these are the "film pedants" who have for so long insisted on distinguishing between what is theatrical and what is cinematic. This has gone so far that it has become a "mark of culture" to discuss movies in terms of their cinematic properties and their theatrical deviations.

Who are these mysterious film pedants? One of the more influential among American intellectual critics (who has unfortunately never, to my knowledge, been published over here) is not really a film critic but one of the world's leading art historians, Professor Erwin Panofsky, well known for his work on Iconography in Art. He has published only one article on the cinema (Princeton University, 1934; reprinted in *Transition*, 1937; revised and expanded in *Critique*, Vol. 1, Number 3, 1947). Nevertheless this single article has been widely read, and has had considerable influence in America.

To Professor Panofsky, the film, as opposed to all other media, has two unique and special possibilities, which he rather formidably expresses as "the dynamisation of space and, accordingly, the spatialisation of time". He goes on to remind us—and it seems that we do need constant reminders—that the arrival of sound did nothing to change the basic fact that "a moving picture remains a picture that moves . . . a series of visual sequences held together by an uninterrupted flow of movement in space, except for the checks and pauses which act like rests in music":

In a film, that which we hear remains, for good or worse, inextricably fused with what we see; the sound, articulate or not, cannot express any more than what is expressed at the same time by visible movement; and in a good film it does not even attempt to do so. To put it briefly, the script of a moving picture is subject to what might be termed the principle of co-expressibility.

I don't think that one need be a "film pedant" to subscribe to Professor Panofsky's main point—the need for the dialogue to be co-expressible, one way or another. On the stage, words are the chief means through which psychological states can be indicated. But on the screen (to return to *Member of the Wedding*), what can the camera do with lines like the following?

. . . The trouble with me is that for a long time I have just been an "I" person. All other people can say "We" . . . All people belong to a "we" except me . . . Not to belong to a "we" makes you too lonesome. Until this afternoon I didn't have a "we". but now I know that the bride and my brother are the "we" of me . . . I love the two of them so much because they are the we of me.

It is not that the cinema cannot express the psychological subtleties of the adolescent's loneliness: it has its own means of doing so, however, and they are largely visual ones. (For example, the adolescent boys in Vigo's *Zéro de Conduite*, or even Sal Mineo in *Rebel Without a Cause*.)

Most of Ethel Waters' dialogue in *Member of the Wedding* is taken up with reminiscing about her past; during this, all we see is the vast amount of vegetables she is peeling and preparing while she talks—surely enough to feed a family of sixteen. The dialogue cannot be made cinematic. It is incapable, that is, of being visually expressed or even visually

counterpointed. What we hear has inevitably very little connection with what we are shown; and, again, one need not be a film pedant to agree that the film must essentially be a unification of sight and sound.

2

The untranslatable dialogue, however, represents only a part of what seems to me wrong with this film. More important is the fact that this type of play—the "mood play"—is by its nature unsuited to the screen, needing profound modifications if it is to be successfully re-created as a film. It was the playwright John Van Druten, I believe, who first discussed, defined and hailed the mood play. He defines it as "a play that is all atmosphere, with no plot at all . . . (or) in any case, the smallest modicum of plot that can be thrown in to hold the play together". The forerunner of this type of play was, he says, Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*; its two most distinguished examples are *The Glass Menagerie* and *The Member of the Wedding*. He admits, however, that *Member of the Wedding* is open to criticism on the grounds that the action is too slight.

Detractors of the mood play have complained, and I believe justly, that plot (in the Aristotelian sense) is the life and soul of the drama. Therefore, should not playwrights ask themselves why they need the stage if they cannot or will not show events, but are only interested in depicting character or evoking moods? As Mr. William Becker has said: "It may be time to inquire if the devices of fiction are not just as adequate, if not more so, to the purpose they have set for themselves".

So much for the mood play. Why is it unsuited to cinematic treatment? For one thing, as I have already intimated, the theatre has to go to great lengths to provide the "mood quality" that the cinema can achieve so easily and so quickly. For example, the first sequence of *Member of the Wedding*—a long tree-shaded avenue on a hot summer afternoon in the deep South—beautifully placed us, setting the tone and mood of the film and so rendering redundant a great deal of the dialogue which was, of course, necessary on stage to give us the feeling that the play was taking place in a town with long, tree-shaded avenues on a hot summer afternoon in the deep South.

Secondly, the play has very little incident. We may, like Mr. Kenneth Tynan, enjoy watching this "tone-poem for three voices," in which "nothing happens, and happens happily, for we are content to watch the bright, smog-free verbal cobwebs with which Miss McCullers fills the stage". But the screen has not much to do with verbal cobwebs; so we are left to watch the three of them, settled down in that kitchen, telling each other stories.

Telling stories—for they are talking to themselves, not to each other, and that is the third difficulty in filming the mood play, or at any rate this one: there is no real dialogue. They are not talking to each other; there is no real interaction between them. And that is fatal, for even the longest passages of dialogue can be "co-expressed", provided that the camera can concentrate on the interaction between the characters, on the effect a speech has on the listener, and so on.

Let me reiterate in this conjunction that I do not for a moment suggest that plays cannot be successfully filmed either on the level of "pure art" (*Les Parents Terribles*; *Miss Julie*), or on the lower level of the good "preserved performance" film (*The Philadelphia Story*). It would seem, however, that the play with the most plot makes the best bet for screen treatment. (After all, what play has a more complex plot than Labiche's *Chapeau de Paille d'Italie*, and what a good film it made—and without dialogue.) Plot, moreover, can triumph even over the single set, as in *Les Parents Terribles*, for the camera can intensify, modify or transmute the interactions which make up the drama. But mood, which has to be so carefully and slowly evoked on the stage, can be achieved in the cinema, as we have seen, in three or



"A Streetcar Named Desire": tenement block in New Orleans. ". . . In 'Streetcar' it is the setting rather than the acting that seems stagey".

four minutes, leaving the rest of the film—for what?

To return: I do realise that one of the points of *Member of the Wedding* is that this girl is lonely, that she has no one really suitable to listen to her or to understand her, so that she simply pours out her yearnings and her tantrums to the only audience she has. But this, unfortunately, remains a theatrical idea, and it has not been effectively translated into screen terms or language.

A particular problem of *Member of the Wedding* is that, after virtually doing without incident for two acts, it does finally have to introduce some climactic action, with the result that all the happenings are crowded into the three short scenes of act three. This was, I believe, a weakness in the play itself. On the screen, it becomes almost catastrophic. You may remember that, as the light goes out in John Henry's room, there is a slow fade-out. When we fade-in again, we find that he has been dead for about a month, and that during this time Frankie has found a girl friend and is at peace with the world; that Honey has been sent up for ten years; that Berenice is leaving; that Frankie is moving. It is just too much. Precisely the things that you don't want to show (or cannot show) on the stage are the very ones that are so effective and necessary on the screen.

3

There is another problem affecting this film, and many other pictures that derive from the mood play. This is what we may call their portrayal, or non-portrayal, of the social situation. The mood play, by definition, must evolve in more or less of a social vacuum. On the screen, however, this vacuum is likely to become more damagingly apparent. We see, after all, Frankie's house, the street she lives on, and even a bit of the town; and we cannot in consequence separate her from the particular environment in which she lives, especially when this assumes such significance in the sub-plot about the Negro, Honey. In a film like *Les Parents Terribles*, this problem never arises: the whole drama is concerned with the family relationships, and one of its main points is the family's claustrophobic existence behind what Giraudoux called "the obstinately closed shutters of the Third Republic".

But in *Member of the Wedding*, this problem of environment is crucial; and symptomatic of the lack of social perspective is what may be called the phenomenon of the empty streets. When Frankie goes out during the day, she sees a postman, to whom she confides her plans for going away, and she sees her father. Otherwise, the streets are empty; the town does

not really exist.

Although on the stage we might just accept the fact that Honey's problems are presented only as they affect Berenice and Frankie, on the screen this becomes more difficult. We tend to resent the fact that his situation has been introduced merely as something to make Frankie grow up (if, indeed, it does). You cannot introduce casually on the screen elements that are only intended to act on a character, because the film itself is too bound up with reality. Either the problem is important enough to be explored, or it doesn't belong. And when I say explored, I mean seen. It comes down finally to this: either you isolate your characters from social circumstances and situations (as in Cocteau's film) or you integrate them. No compromise is finally possible.

The chief reason for this lack of social perspective is the failure of director and screen writer to realise that, in translating a play into a film, they must put back just what the author has taken out in order to write the play—the surroundings, the social situation. After all, compared with the cinema, the theatre is almost an abstract medium. The material, that is, has been concentrated and abstracted from life in order to give it theatrical form; and of course the very power of the drama derives from this concentration.

Non-recognition of this fact has marred other films. For example, in *Death of a Salesman* Arthur Miller has tried to depict a certain social problem and has, for the purposes of the stage, been forced to isolate his hero from his environment. But the cinema is neither so concentrated nor so abstract, and Lazlo Benedek's screen version would have been far more satisfactory if he had somehow managed to show us Willy Loman in a social context. As it is, the empty street phenomenon which weakened *Member of the Wedding* is almost fatal to *Death of a Salesman*. Except for Willie's visit to Manhattan, we never get beyond his house—that house which is supposed to be in a heavily built up area, but where no-one other than the protagonists seems to live. During the trip to Manhattan, the theatrical nature of the flashbacks is over-emphasised by the way people in the subway appear and disappear so as to keep out of their way. Even the cemetery has no apparent attendants. These may be minor points, but they indicate the failure to re-think the play in terms of cinema.

There are other examples, in both *The Rose Tattoo* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, of the unhappy consequences of carrying over into the cinema essentially theatrical conceptions. Notably, there are those "symbolic" characters who seem to bear no relation to the life around them. Since the stage play is an extended metaphor, we can accept *The Rose Tattoo's* Serafina in the theatre as the author's idea of female sexuality. But on the screen we have to see her as an inhabitant of a particular town, living among a group of ordinary people. And the character does not fit the surroundings. If the action of the film had been confined to the house, as was the case with the stage original, it could have been developed as a hermetic drama about a woman (cf. *Les Parents Terribles*): place it against the setting of that town, and the illusion is destroyed.

Much the same problems arise with *Streetcar*. Stanley, the author's idea of male sexuality, is unimaginable except as a symbolic character. Outside the house, outside his sexual functions, he becomes unreal; and indeed the scenes in the factory and the bowling alley ring distinctly false. The same is true of the Mexican flower lady. On the stage, she was just acceptable as a symbol of death. In the film, appearing out of nowhere, she looks wholly ridiculous; and even the fog machines squirting around and behind her cannot serve sufficiently to isolate her from a locale in which she so obviously has no place.

4

One final problem affects the transfer from stage to screen: that of theatrical techniques and settings. In *Member of the*

Wedding Julie Harris undoubtedly gives a performance of superb virtuosity. But if we compare her playing with that of the small boy, Brandon de Wilde, we become aware of a significant difference. He is (more or less) what he is supposed to be; she gives a great imitation of what she is supposed to be. Her playing—in this film at least—has lost none of its stagey overtones. For example, the way she has of talking to herself, and listening to herself, is wonderful and at the same time over-contrived. She acts in front of the camera, just as she acted in front of the footlights, and we always have the impression that she knows she is being watched, and even that she *likes* being watched. Ethel Waters, too, with her theatrical non-theatricality, her studied simplicity, her unnatural naturalism, is too much of a stage actress. She also knows that she is being watched, and she wants it to look good. But the real movie player seems either to have been taken by surprise, or like Anna Magnani, not to care whether she is being watched or not.

In *A Streetcar Named Desire* it is the setting rather than the acting that seems stagey. If the sets were intended to be presented as seen through Blanche's eyes, their misty "poetic" quality would be quite in keeping. But this is a film, we are seeing the décors through our own eyes, and (compared with the actuality of the bowling alley or the station) their falsity becomes apparent. On the stage, the sets would reasonably represent all of New Orleans that we were allowed to see: on the screen, the décors only accentuate the general artificiality of the film's atmospherics.

In the adaptation of Richard Nash's play *The Rainmaker* (director: Joseph Anthony), we have a fine performance by Katharine Hepburn, pretending to be a shy and gawky girl of 28, just as we had Julie Harris doing the girl of 14. Again it's a performance and we can marvel at it, knowing that Miss Hepburn will never see 45 again, but it is never made real. For that matter, neither is the town where the action takes place, another of those stage-set towns where nobody lives, where only the principals are seen in the streets.

Nor is Burt Lancaster real as the confidence trickster; saddled with lines that defy "co-expressibility", all that he can do is smile. And saddled with so much blatantly theatrical dialogue, all the camera can do is to pan around the room, settle down on two people sitting on the couch talking, and stay there. Then, after several minutes, it pans over to the stairs and settles down there for another long session. Apart from occasional excursions outside the house, that is virtually the camera's only function. And what are we given to listen to while it is stationary? Not "Hello, Mr. Moon" poetry as in *Streetcar*, but "homely" prose-poetry in which every image is excused by an "I reckon".

5

So much for what I believe to be wrong with films of this kind. It is worth considering, though, Hollywood's interest in making such pictures. First, of course, there is the film companies' liking for "pre-sold" material—subjects that have already proved successful as novels or plays. But that only brings us to ask why these particular plays have been successful, and, ultimately, why the screen versions have in many cases achieved popularity. (Not all of them, though, have done well at the box-office, and neither *Member of the Wedding* nor *Death of a Salesman* were commercially very successful on the screen.)

Until and even during the war, the Broadway stage was largely dominated by the social problem play (Odets, Hellman, etc.) and the cinema followed suit. During the Depression and for some years afterwards, when the country was in a state of economic crisis, films and plays about social problems were a response to a national state of mind. But in present circumstances such films have lost their quality of immediacy. For, although it would be foolish to maintain that all of America's economic problems have been solved, the greater part of the American public is now fairly well

off, or at any rate better off than at any previous time. For example, a film like *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit* presents us (however incoherently) with a survey of the problems of the man of the 1950's. Is 7,000 dollars a year enough? Shall we move into a bigger house? Can one uphold personal integrity at the risk of losing one's job? It is obvious that such a film would have been unimaginable in the 'thirties, when a Depression public would have found it difficult to sympathise with such problems, or even to admit that they were problems. If you are selling apples on a street corner, you cannot be expected to worry about whether \$7,000 a year is really enough.

On the other hand, when your annual wage is guaranteed, as is already the case for workers in the automobile industry, and when unemployment and having enough to eat no longer present a great problem, you are faced with the different problem of leisure—what to do and what to think about when you are not working. In many states the working week has come down from the 48 hours of the early 'thirties to 40 hours, while the unions are already beginning to agitate for a 35 hour week. The problem, therefore, becomes one of killing time, and love has always been for many people one of the most time-filling (if not time-killing) and satisfying of leisure pastimes. Therefore, we have the mood play, largely concerned with the problems of love and sex and tending to present them as being the only important things in the world—which I suppose they become when the economic man has been taken care of. Love, the opium of the masses? In this case, I think not. Love is not being plugged to take the worker's mind off the social injustices perpetrated against him, but simply to fill his mind up with *something*. Even the slight flavour of perversion in some of these films perhaps answers a need; the most satisfactory sex becomes slightly boring after a while, and the great answer to boredom is a new "kick", especially when the "kick" can be had without any real danger.

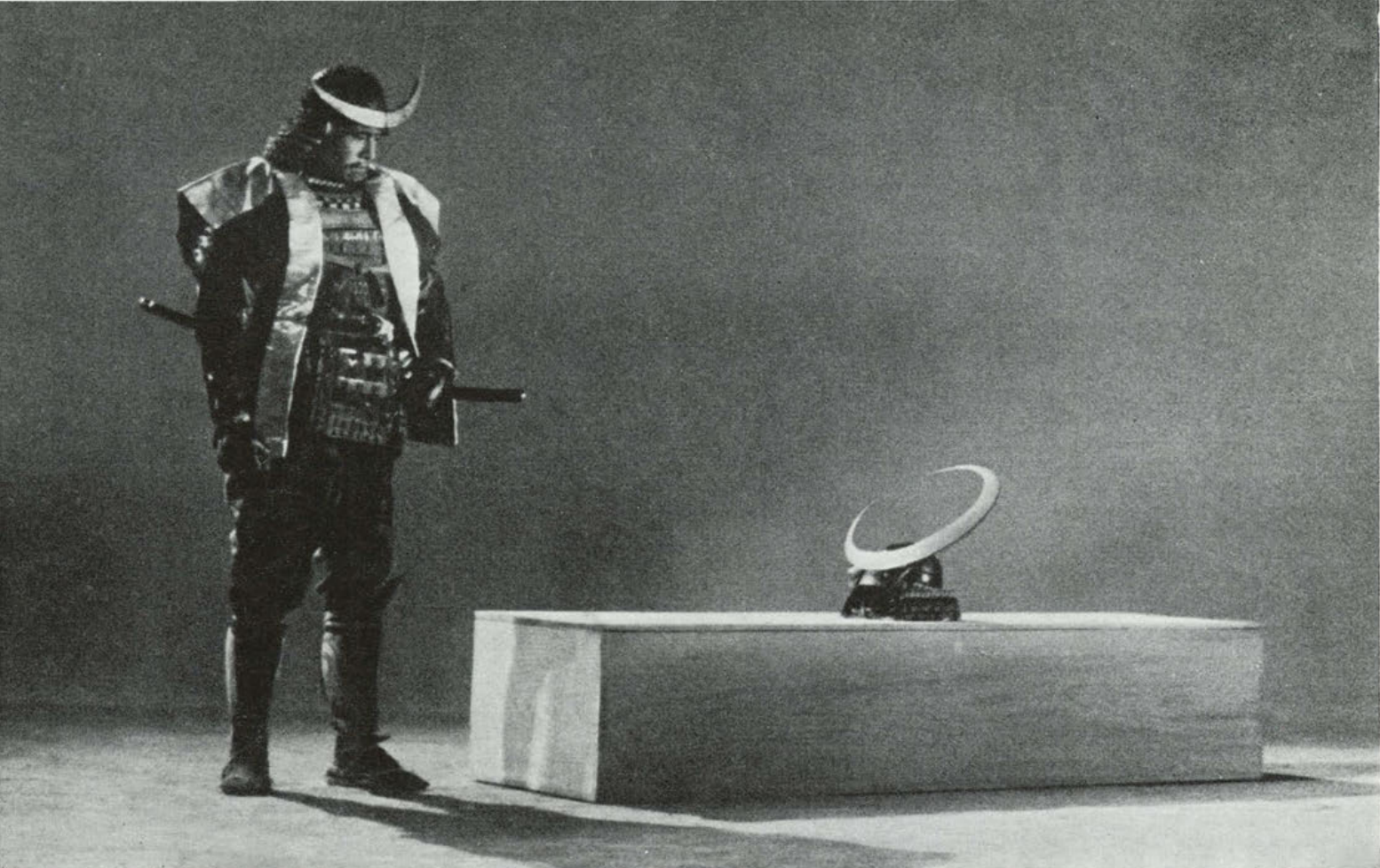
Does this mean that material wealth and prosperity are always followed by decadence? Perhaps, but then we must be able to define what we mean by decadence.

In any event, while most Europeans traditionally think of love as a force which creates problems, most Americans have always felt that it solves all problems. This idea has been inherited along with the other ideas that America took over from French philosophy of the eighteenth century, such as the belief in the ultimate perfectibility of man and the disbelief in sin or evil (they are only questions of improper environment, or of psychological deviation). It is on such beliefs that America was founded, and along with these ideas goes the conviction, common to all pioneer societies, that if you believe in yourself and in success you will, with a little hard work, succeed. And so in the mood play, confidence is usually rewarded. Miss Hepburn gets her man; Miss Harris gets her girl friend; Miss Magnani gets Burt Lancaster; and everyone else will get the man or woman they want—at least, until the next depression.

The mood plays, therefore, are likely to be with us for quite a while longer. Even though the basic content may not greatly change, there are already signs that Hollywood is learning to translate them to the screen with greater formal success. *Bus Stop*, *Picnic* and *Baby Doll* may not be great films, but at least their action is seen somewhat against the social background from which it has developed; and stage devices and techniques are largely eschewed. In short, they have in some measure succeeded in putting back what the playwright had taken out, and the streets are again full of people.

Stationary camera: Three duologues from "*The Rainmaker*": Above: Wendell Corey and Katharine Hepburn; centre, Earl Holliman and Burt Lancaster; below, Hepburn and Lancaster.





A Japanese MACBETH



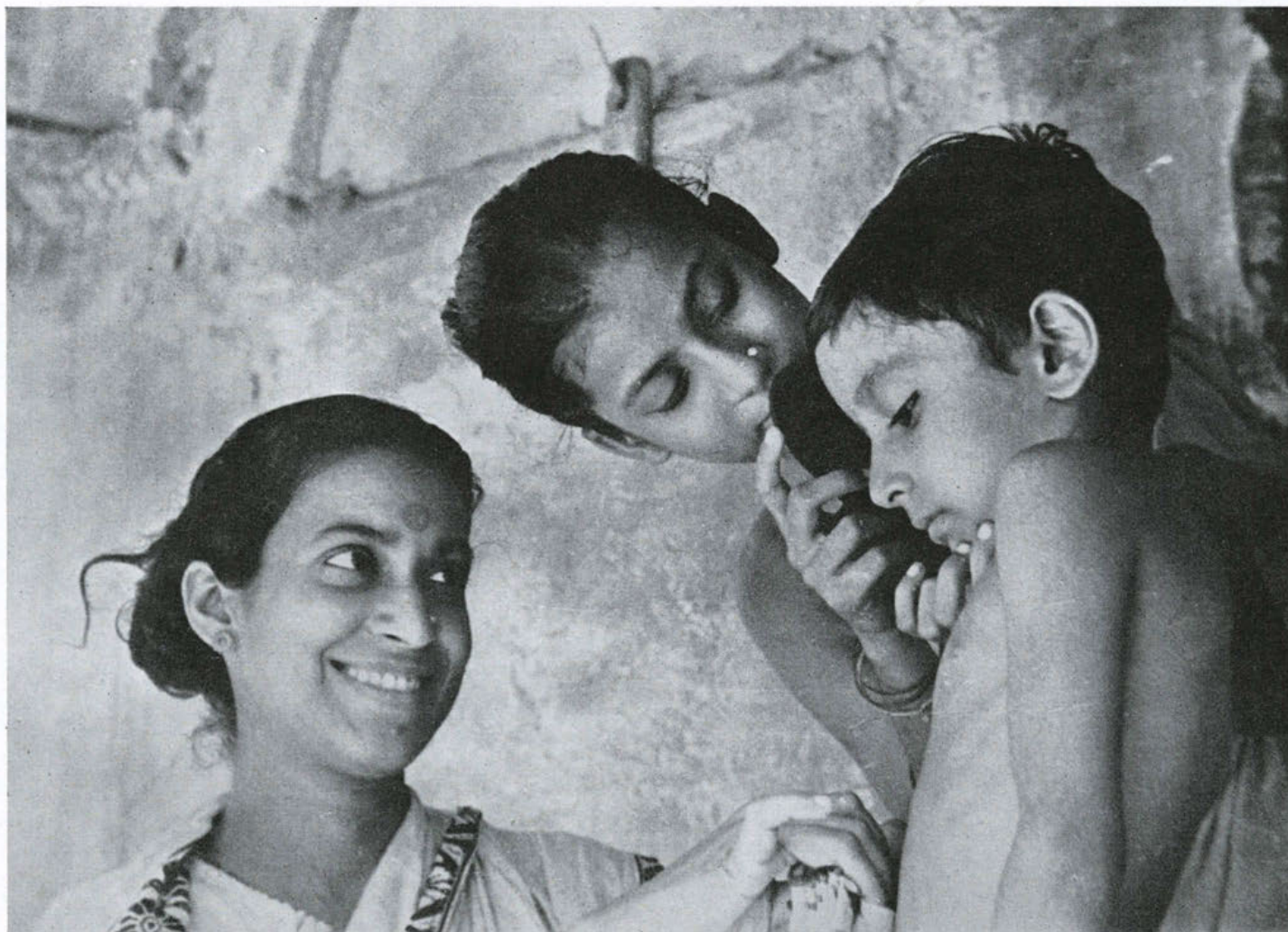
Akira Kurosawa's new film, *Kumoonso-jo* (*Cobweb Castle*, or *The Throne of Blood*) translates the story and much of the action of *Macbeth* to a sixteenth century Japanese setting. The central character is Taketoki Washizu, a general serving Lord Tsuzuki, master of Cobweb Castle. Prompted by his wife, Washizu murders Tsuzuki and takes command of Cobweb Castle. He is killed in battle when the son of a rival warlord, one of his victims, attacks the castle.

Kurosawa has apparently wholly assimilated Shakespeare's theme into a Japanese feudal setting, and has developed the story in an atmosphere of immense tension and violence. The leading players are Toshiro Mifune, who has acted in almost all Kurosawa's films, and Isuzu Yamada. The cost (something over £100,000) puts the film among the most expensive Japanese productions.

Left and below, right: Toshiro Mifune as Taketoki Washizu. Below, left: Isuzu Yamada, an actress who follows the traditional style of the Noh play, in the hand-washing scene.

KUROSAWA'S 'THRONE OF BLOOD'





Bengali village family in Satyajit Ray's "Pather Panchali".

Journey through India

by MARIE SETON

The Indian cinema, the third largest industry in the world, is still relatively unknown in the West, and it is only recently that films like "Pather Panchali" and "Munna" have broken through some of the restricting conventions that have previously handicapped Indian films with European audiences. We hope in a future issue to publish a survey of the Indian cinema. Both the articles that follow, meanwhile, are essentially records of personal experience—by a European critic and an Indian film-maker.

DURING 1955 I was invited to India, under the auspices of the Indian Ministry of Education, to speak on various aspects of cinema. I went there under a grant for experimental work. In cities like Bombay and Calcutta, much of my work was carried on in air-conditioned studios and theatres no different from those found in Hollywood. But I also worked in villages under the stars, and had the experience of projecting films at a Community Project in a rock-strewn area thirty miles from Hyderabad, which was done in broad daylight using a projector ingeniously devised by two members of the Project staff. (Yet there are people who will tell you Indians have no mechanical talent.)

My nine months' work, continuing into 1956, encompassed the great triangle of India. Inevitably, reactions to the films I

showed differed widely. In the so-called backward state of Bihar, where purdah still secludes many Hindu as well as Muslim women of the middle and upper classes, four thousand people, gathered a mile or two from the place of Buddha's Enlightenment, were not in the least shocked by the semi-nude hammock sequence in *Time in the Sun*. Yet in the city of Madras, which looks much like an Italian Riviera town, several teachers from much-Anglicised women's colleges were of the opinion that this sequence was "obscene" and that the film should only be shown to segregated audiences—all men or all women.

What is striking about this Madras opinion is the fact that it appears to deny the creative heritage of the Madrasis themselves, for nearly every temple in this area presents at least some remarkable examples of erotic sculpture, some coming exceedingly close to the pornographic while the rest are amongst India's most spiritually-motivated sculpture. Contradictions such as this abound in India: the range of social organisation is enormous, the diversity of individual attitudes equally great, and for everything that may appear true of one district, or of one group, its opposite will be found to be equally true somewhere else. This is perhaps the most complex country and culture in the world, and nothing one can say of it is absolute.

My tour began in Bombay, which is cosmopolitan because here people from every state and linguistic group are represented. The Films Division of the Ministry of Information had charge of my Bombay lectures and kept me busy for my first month, including a six-day seminar under the auspices of Theatre Centre. The subjects were: *Film Appreciation*; *Drawings that Walk and Talk* (the history of animation and trick films); *Eisenstein's Life and Work*; *Eisenstein in Mexico*; *Film Societies* and *Documentary Films*. Similar seminars were also held in Delhi and Calcutta, and in Ahmedabad's Town Hall at the invitation of the new and experimental Municipal Museum.

Mrs. Kamladevi, the political leader and patron of the arts who resembles nothing so much as a sixth century polychrome Buddha, inaugurated the Bombay and Delhi seminars. Her slow, thoughtful words made me feel that I had been asked to contribute something to an exceedingly ancient and enduring culture which was now seeking to incorporate new ideas, to explore new forms of expression. It was clear that there were people in, or close to, the Government who were anxious to discover whether or not the cinema could express mature themes, what was its value to the new India.

Throughout India—whether showing films in the house of Mr. Nehru and his daughter Indira, who has such an acute appreciation of all the arts, or at screenings for villagers who had never before seen a film—I was aware of people who approached things with untarnished and questioning minds. This open-mindedness was vividly symbolised in the figure of M. D. Bhat, chief of the Central Board of Film Censors, who became the mentor of a plan which I drew up for the development of a film society movement, and also introduced the subject of film appreciation to his Censor Board.

It was evident from the interest taken by the Press and All-India Radio that a critical appraisal of cinema and film history represented something new and stimulating. Night

after night the audience at the Bombay seminar increased in size; and even here, where the audience was composed of all manner of artists, films like *Potemkin*, *Storm Over Asia*, *Earth*, *Kameradschaft*, *Le Million*, *L'Idée*, *Papageno* and *The Drama of Christ* came as something of a new experience in cinema. There was much discussion at every session, the most animated of any in India except at the Teachers' Training College in Calcutta, the British Council Film Society in Madras and the University of Mysore. One film I had omitted was *Dr. Caligari*, because it seemed so very remote from the Indian scene. But the Films Division asked me to send for an extract from this film, of which so many people had read but which no-one except Jean Bhowmagary had seen.

Bhowmagary had charge of me in Bombay. At that time he was Deputy Chief Producer at the Films Division, which releases some hundred and fifty documentaries a year as well as a weekly newsreel. Since he was eager for the idea of Film Appreciation to spread in India through a film society movement, he was anxious that the Films Division technicians study all the films I had brought with me. So the crate of films remained at the studio, and whenever there was time people projected the films themselves.

We spent days, both then and after my return to Bombay, discussing and comparing the Government documentaries currently in production with those produced earlier. It appeared that the current films were seeking to reach deeper into the complex Indian scene. But I felt much handicapped when Bhowmagary asked me to criticise these films, for my knowledge of the Indian scene itself was still theoretical



Garlanded statue of the goddess Kali at the Shree Sound Studio.

rather than actual. One impression I had was that many Indian documentaries appeared too aloof in approach, and some seemed to lack what I supposed to be the rhythms of Indian life. I felt a need to see something of India as quickly as possible, since Bombay obviously was not India. It had always been my understanding that the village was India, that the villager kept alive the Indian heritage.

2

Before the end of my first week in India, I took the night train for Poona, and then boarded a bus for the eighty-mile climb to the hill station of Mahabaleshwar, a centre of the Marathe people. My fellow passengers treated me to tea, bananas and oranges every time we stopped in a village. I found myself a dot swallowed up in the multitudinous surge of Indian life: I surprised no-one and to tell the truth no-one surprised me.

I stayed for several days with the family of Shamlal, who writes under the name "Adib" and is India's most perceptive critic of the arts. We lived in one of the bungalows of a holiday camp that has taken root in the compound of the former Government House. The decaying adaptation of the English country house symbolised past and present: the formal garden is still dotted with the forms of neo-classical stone vases which had never been drilled out to make them usable for anything; while the huge rooms have become dormitories for teachers taking refresher courses. Every day we walked for miles through semi-jungle, meeting Marathe villagers whose mode of life has not changed in a thousand years. Yet here and there the road or path is lighted by a London lamp-post of the gaslight era. We went to ancient villages where life circles round the Siva temple with its anatomically phallic altar, and to scientifically run bee farms where jars of honey looked as if they contained pounds of the rainbow. We found our way to the battleground of Sivaji, the Maharashtra hero, where an old villager and his withered wife begged for a pice, and took a rowing boat out on a prim little lake with a neat little café which could have been anywhere in the world.

I came back to Poona by night in a third-class bus, halting in villages where people sang by torchlight to the intense tap-tap of drums. The genteely Westernised Parsi ladies and gentlemen, and the no less genteel but less Westernised high-caste Hindus, who had been holidaying in the district, looked slightly alarmed and withdrawn from some of our fellow-passengers, many of them piquant-faced but tough-as-leather Marathe peasant women who chatted uninhibitedly while their jewelled nose-rings gently bobbed. Why had I never seen these exquisitely provocative faces in an Indian film?

I began to feel the complexity of the Indian scene: antique refinement staring perplexed at ancient robustness; the stone jewels of two thousand years ago in silver replica around the necks and ankles of living people; the advance guard of science come to beat at the door of the temple sanctuary. Surely India would produce a new Eisenstein, for one's impression is of a fabulous montage of imagery, all the more striking as the expression of man because so much of the landscape is dull and innocuous.

3

My first journey gave me an approach to my own work. Indian films must be seen and criticised in the light of what I could learn of the life they reflected, or failed to reflect; while international films should be presented to Indian audiences in relation to whatever I could find in India that could afford a parallel. For instance, Emmer's *The Drama of Christ*, based on Giotto's frescoes, could be related to the lively frescoes of Buddha's life in the rock-hewn caves of Ajunta; and the silhouette films of Lotte Reiniger could be related to the tradition of the shadow plays of Mysore.

This approach proved effective, helping to bridge the apparent distance in culture between Asia and Europe. It also turned the attention of people to the cinematic potential in various indigenous aspects of Indian life and art. When I spoke in Delhi on "Art in Cinema", the reference to the Ajunta frescoes in connection with the Giotto film sparked an editorial in the *Hindustan Times*, suggesting the production of an Ajunta film of Buddha's life. Months later, when Bimal Roy was producing a sculpture film for the 2,225th Buddhist anniversary, his director studied Emmer's film and also Eisenstein's shots of Mexican sculpture in *Time in the Sun*. When I saw *Khajuraho*, the Films Division picture shown at the Edinburgh Festival, and which we had discussed in its early stages, it seemed possible that Tisse's camerawork of Mexican carving, which gives such an appreciation of the value of light and shadow, may have lingered in the minds of the Films Division's director and cameraman.

Eisenstein's films evoked much interest. Raj Kapoor, the actor-producer who is endeavouring to raise standards in the entertainment film, asked me to bring Eisenstein's work to the studio for his staff to see. I was excited beyond measure when a young group—the Assistant Directors' Association—invited me to an evening of questions and answers, again on the work of Eisenstein. David (David Abraham), who doubles as a character actor and India's Olympic Games representative, presided, and we discussed all manner of technical questions. It was the first night of Devali—the



Indian cinema: Hollywood-style extravaganza. A dance scene from "Jhansi Ki Rani" (1953), the first Indian technicolor film and an account of the anti-British exploits of a warrior queen.

autumn Festival of Lights—and as we left the studio compound, people I supposed to be property men were decorating a figure of Kali, goddess of the long red tongue who wears a garland of carved human heads. In front of her were offerings and rangoli patterns sprinkled out in coloured sand. I asked in what film Kali was appearing. But Kali was appearing in no film: *puja*—sacrifice—was being made to her by the studio staff. I realised then how the many scenes of *puja* sprinkling in Indian films reflect the sentiments of her people. When I saw Kali being worshipped in the Shree Sound Studio at Dadar, fierce as she looked she still took her place in my mind beside the icons of the Greek Orthodox faith and the Madonnas of Italy with their holy lights over the doorways. (In India, it is the gay elephant-headed Ganesh who is the guardian of doorways.)

It seemed to me that while the Indian film industry is largely dominated by commercial considerations, there are numerous people in it who would like, if possible, to inject new ideas and explore the medium more fully. In Calcutta I met the same enthusiasm among people in the industry, allied with great warmth and generosity of spirit. My week's seminar there was arranged by the Bengal Motion Picture Association at the Indrapurie Studio, and the Association went to immense trouble to show me films every evening before the sessions. What particularly struck me about these Bengali films was the strong influence of the theatre and literature; also the seriousness of many of the themes.

4

India, which should never be pictured as exotic, is nevertheless a place where the unexpected happens and the ability to improvise is very helpful. On arrival in Delhi, I discovered that the Ministry of Education had somehow got the idea I was an expert on films for education, something I have never been. It was also assumed that I knew all about films for children. Thus, I was confronted with some unexpected problems: instructing village teachers in the use of films; introducing the idea of films for education to university people: while one day I was suddenly faced with several hundred school children when I had studiously prepared a "paper" to present to what I supposed were the faculty members of Delhi's Modern School. In a single day I found myself participating in a symposium on the historical and biographical Indian film and sitting on Mr. Nehru's drawing-room floor entertaining the children of the world with Chaplin's *The Immigrant* and extracts from *Nanook of the North*, *Alexander Nevsky*, and a gay Czechoslovak cartoon, *The Trees and the Wind*. When we took a popularity poll, Eisenstein won hands down.

The challenge of diversity with which the Ministry confronted me necessitated combining films in many different ways and to illustrate different aspects of cinema. One evening at a teachers' training college at Jamia Millia, some twenty miles from Delhi, we had an idea: we could return here and, with the help of the Principal, could show films to villagers who could neither read nor write and had never before seen a film. The Principal agreed to help us, and the next Sunday was set for our experiment. At the last moment an old friend of mine, D. G. Tenulkar, who had studied film in Moscow under Eisenstein and Pudovkin and afterwards spent twelve years working with Gandhi on a monumental biography, decided that he wanted to go with us. He was staying at the Prime Minister's house, so we picked him up there in our mobile van, manned by a crew of electricians, projectionists, a Ministry of Education psychologist, Mr.



Indian cinema: neo-realist simplicity. A scene from K. A. Abbas' "Munna" (1954).

Kher, and myself in a Gandhian homespun sari so as not to alarm the villagers.

We had no hard and fast plan of action, except to start by showing *The Immigrant*. The film was not to be introduced with any words nor the captions read out. We wanted to see how people would react simply to the images on the screen. The people assembled were illiterate and practically none of them had ever seen a film. There were fourteen women and their children, and the men, about fifty of them, represented a cross-section of any Indian village—agricultural workers, tradesmen, labourers, weavers, cattlemen and others.

Mr. Kher made a record of the audience reactions to Chaplin: "The audience participated and reacted well, especially the children who laughed all through the film except on a few occasions. . . . The women's identification shifted quickly from a pleasant to an unpleasant mood. Expressions of sympathy and pity were heard during the scene where the widow was being consoled. . . . Some of the card players in the audience identified themselves very quickly with Chaplin when he shuffled cards. Remarks like 'card-cheater' were heard and this led to a whispering campaign". Later we discussed the film with the audience in groups of four or five. Everyone liked it except a few old men who disapproved of the "sex" and "quarrelling" scenes. The sequences singled out as most popular were the catching of fish at the beginning; the tying up of the immigrants behind a rope (as the Statue of Liberty is passed); and the beating of the man who does not pay his bill in the restaurant.

We decided to swing to the opposite pole, following *The Immigrant* with the Odessa Steps sequence from *Potemkin*. Jamia Millia was an area where there had been much violence in 1947, at the time of the Partition between India and Pakistan. Reactions to *Potemkin* were highly emotional, the gist of all the opinions being that "it hurt the heart". Some people said that such a film should not be shown because, in this place, it revived painful memories. *Potemkin* was followed by Lotte Reiniger's silhouette film *Papageno*, and the whole audience responded with the greatest appreciation to Mozart's music. I think it fair to say that it is unlikely any European peasant audience would give Indian classical

music such an immediate response: they would probably find it "strange".

Finally we showed the Cream Separator sequence from *The General Line*, the sequence deliberately planned to stir Russian peasants to the use of cream separators for the processing of butter. Upon release in the Soviet Union, the film was criticised as too intellectual; and in this sequence the tempo of the montage mounts to a crescendo. In India the view has been that editing of films for peasants should be slow and the words very explanatory. The peasants of Jamia Millia did not understand a word of the captions, yet their opinion was "we think the old way of processing butter is best".

As we sat on the floor surrounded by these villagers and later questioned them, I felt I was witnessing the meeting of the world's most ancient and unchanged way of life with this century's most powerful means of communication—images that speak. Only one other audience stirred my imagination to the same extent.

This was at the small town of Gaya, close to the huge pyramidal monument marking the place where Prince Sidhartha is said to have entered the realm of Buddhahood. Today Gaya is surrounded by eroded land and, expecting few visitors, has neither hotel nor Dak-tourist bungalow. I was put up for two days in the station waiting room. Yet Gaya has a college with an audio-visual education department. Its president, Professor Shridhar, had in his letter given me the impression that there must be a small, well-informed film group; and so, when I went there from Patna, I took only three films: *The Trees and the Wind*, *The Drama of Christ* and *Time in the Sun*. Going to the college in the evening, I was dumbfounded to find four thousand students and townspeople assembled. It struck me that I had brought terribly unsuitable films, except perhaps for the Czech cartoon. Then I found that very few people understood English and I would have to be translated into Hindi.

I started to explain about the films and off went the microphone, which remained obstinately dead in spite of repeated attempts to put it in order. Then the electricity for the projector failed. This was at last fixed, and with a few words

shouted out *The Trees and the Wind*, with its commentary in Czech, flashed on the screen. At the end, those four thousand people rose and cheered and thumped approval.

A Gaya student wrote his opinion: "It is very useful for children and illiterates. The things are put in such a nice way that they become very interesting; for example, the trees and clouds have been given the shape of human beings, so that it is very easy to understand. In the picture they easily understand what is the use of trees, how the rain falls, what are the benefits and what are the troubles if the rain does not fall. . . . Through this kind of picture they understand easily and will not forget easily".

The reaction to *The Drama of Christ* was quieter, the mood more questioning. Someone gave the opinion that "this type of film should be made in India from which Indians may learn about their forefathers". There was tremendous applause at the end of *Time in the Sun*, and someone commented that "through such films an entire history can be understood".

The morning after the showing, while I was breakfasting in the station waiting room, any number of people began to arrive with written opinions about the films they had seen. They sat down, dropping a word here and there. The last arrival was a young railway ticket collector, looking very stiff in his uniform. He sat down very determinedly and told me in equally determined English that he had come to see if I had any ideas on how he could become an engineer. He knew it wasn't my subject, but he had seen the films and liked them. He said in slow, measured tones: "We want to educate ourselves, we want to better ourselves. We will learn any way we can".

He fell silent, and the others sat silent too. Nearly everyone wore traditional clothes, and many had the signs of their caste and religious sect painted on their foreheads. Outside, bricklayers were building a wall, their trowels tapping on the bricks as once, two thousand years ago, the trowels of their ancestors had tapped on the stones building the huge pyramid erected to the first known Indian of universal mind—the Buddha.

5

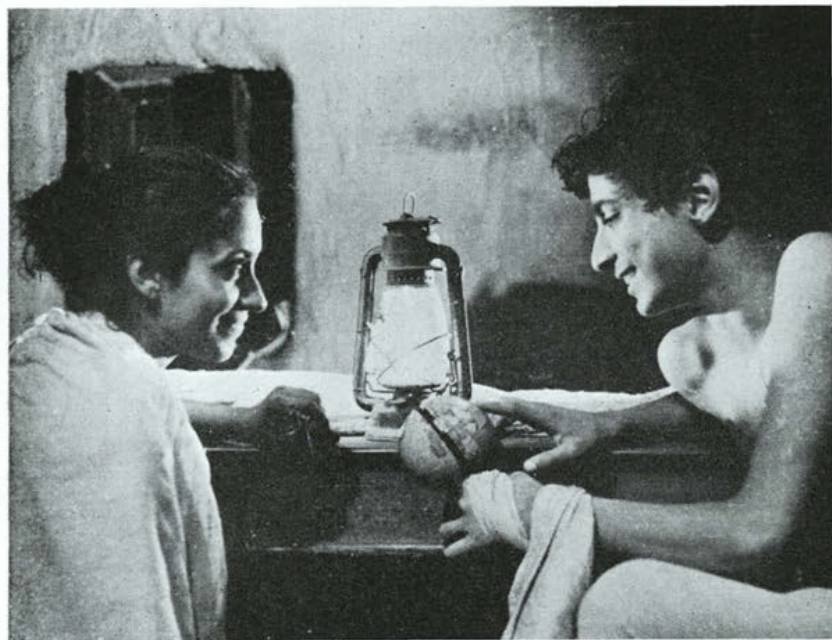
It is this background of the changing and unchanging Indian scene that the Indian cinema reflects. Time and again during my Indian tour I kept recalling scenes from the Bengali film *Pather Panchali*. In place after place, and not only in Bengal, I met the particular quality in people that Satyajit Ray has so movingly evoked on the screen. In Bombay and its suburbs there are scenes of daily life which have found expression in K. A. Abbas' *Munna*. (The mother in this film is a building worker, and all over India one sees women at work on new buildings.) In Calcutta, the only city where there are still man-drawn rickshaws, I saw scenes which recalled to my mind Bimal Roy's *Do Bigha Zamin* (*Two Acres of Land*) long considered India's best film before *Pather Panchali*.

As the ancient tradition of caste breaks down in India, so more and more directors are coming to see their country and its people with a realistic eye and a warm humanism. This is how we in the West seek to see India.



Village children in the audience at Jamia Millia watching Chaplin's "The Immigrant".

A Long Time on the Little Road



Two scenes from "*Aprajita*", sequel to "*Pather Panchali*", in which the boy Apu grows up to find himself torn between old and new worlds. Left: the twelve-year-old Apu. Right: Apu explains the workings of a globe to his mother.

by SATYAJIT RAY

I REMEMBER the first day's shooting of *Pather Panchali* very well. It was in the festive season, in October, and the last of the big *pujas* was taking place that day. Our location was 75 miles away from Calcutta. As our taxi sped along the Grand Trunk Road we passed through several suburban towns and villages and heard the drums and even had fleeting glimpses of some images. Someone said it would bring us luck. I had my doubts, but I wished to believe it. All who set about making films need luck as much as they need the other things: talent, money, perseverance and so on. We needed a little more of it than most.

I knew this first day was really a sort of rehearsal for us, to break us in, as it were. For most of us it was a start from scratch. There were eight on our unit of whom only one—Bansi, the art director—had previous professional experience. We had a new cameraman, Subrata, and an old, much-used Wall camera which happened to be the only one available for hire on that particular day. Its one discernible advantage seemed to be a device to ensure smoothness of panning. We had no sound equipment, as the scene was to be a silent one.

It was an episode in the screen-play where the two children of the story, brother and sister, stray from their village and chance upon a field of *kaash* flowers. The two have had a quarrel, and here in this enchanted setting they are reconciled and their long journey is rewarded by their first sight of a railway train. I chose to begin with this scene because on paper it seemed both effective and simple. I considered this important, because the whole idea behind launching the production with only 8,000 rupees in the bank was to produce quickly and cheaply a reasonable length of rough cut which we hoped would establish our bonafides, the lack of which

had so far stood in the way of our getting a financier.

At the end of the first day's shooting we had eight shots. The children behaved naturally, which was a bit of luck because I hadn't tested them. As for myself, I remember feeling a bit strung up in the beginning; but as work progressed my nerves relaxed and in the end I even felt a kind of elation. However, the scene was only half finished, and on the following Sunday we were back on the same location. But was it the same location? It was hard to believe it. What was on the previous occasion a sea of fluffy whiteness was now a mere expanse of uninspiring brownish grass. We knew *kaash* was a seasonal flower, but surely they were not that shortlived? A local peasant provided the explanation. The flowers, he said, were food to the cattle. The cows and buffaloes had come to graze the day before and had literally chewed up the scenery.

This was a big set-back. We knew of no other *kaash* field that would provide the long shots that I needed. This meant staging the action in a different setting, and the very thought was heartbreaking. Who would have known then that we would be back on the identical location exactly two years later and indulge in the luxury of reshooting the entire scene with the same cast and the same unit but with money provided by the Government of West Bengal?

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When I look back on the making of *Pather Panchali*, I cannot be sure whether it has meant more pain to me than pleasure. It is difficult to describe the peculiar torments of a production held up for lack of funds. The long periods of enforced idleness (there were two gaps totalling a year and



"Aprajita": the father reads from the scriptures to a crowd assembled on a ghat in Benares.

a half) produce nothing but the deepest gloom. The very sight of the scenario is sickening, let alone thoughts of embellishing it with details or brushing up the dialogue.

But work—even a day's work—has rewards, not the least of which is the gradual comprehension of the complex and fascinating nature of film-making itself. The edicts of the theorists, learnt assiduously over the years, doubtless perform some useful function at the back of your mind. But grappling with the medium in a practical way for the first time, you realise (a) that you know rather less about it than you thought you did; (b) that the theorists don't provide all the answers, and (c) that your approach should derive not from Dovzhenko's *Earth*, however much you may love that dance in the moonlight, but from the earth, the soil, of your own country—assuming, of course, that your story has its roots in it.

3

Bibhutibhusan Bannerji's *Pather Panchali* (*The Little Road*) was serialised in a popular Bengali magazine in the early 1930's. The author had been brought up in a village and the book contained much that was autobiographical. The manuscript had been turned down by the publishers on the grounds that it lacked a story. The magazine, too, was initially reluctant to accept it, but later did so on condition that it would be discontinued if the readers of the magazine so wished. But the story of Apu and Durga was a hit from the first instalment. The book, published a year or so later,

was an outstanding critical and popular success and has remained on the best-seller list ever since.

I chose *Pather Panchali* for the qualities that made it a great book: its humanism, its lyricism, and its ring of truth. I knew I would have to do a lot of pruning and reshaping—I certainly could not go beyond the first half, which ended with the family's departure for Benares—but at the same time I felt that to cast the thing into a mould of cut and dried narrative would be wrong. The script had to retain some of the rambling quality of the novel because that in itself contained a clue to the feel of authenticity; life in a poor Bengali village does ramble.

Considerations of form, rhythm or movement didn't worry me much at this stage. I had my nucleus: the family, consisting of husband and wife, the two children, and the old aunt. The characters had been so conceived by the author that there was a constant and subtle interplay between them. I had my time span of one year. I had my contrasts—pictorial as well as emotional: the rich and the poor, the laughter and the tears, the beauty of the countryside and the grimness of poverty existing in it. Finally, I had the two natural halves of the story culminating in two poignant deaths. What more could a scenarist want?

What I lacked was first-hand acquaintance with the *milieu* of the story. I could, of course, draw upon the book itself, which was a kind of encyclopædia of Bengali rural life, but I knew that this was not enough. In any case, one had only to drive six miles out of the city to get to the heart of the

authentic village.

While far from being an adventure in the physical sense, these explorations into the village nevertheless opened up a new and fascinating world. To one born and bred in the city, it had a new flavour, a new texture; and its values were different. It made you want to observe and probe, to catch the revealing details, the telling gestures, the particular turns of speech. You wanted to fathom the mysteries of "atmosphere". Does it consist in the sight, or in the sounds? How to catch the subtle difference between dawn and dusk, or convey the grey humid stillness that precedes the first monsoon shower? Is sunlight in Spring the same as sunlight in Autumn? . . .

The more you probed the more was revealed, and familiarity bred not contempt but love, understanding, tolerance. Problems of film-making began to recede into the background and you found yourself belittling the importance of the camera. After all, you said, it is only a recording instrument. The important thing is Truth. Get at it and you've got your great humanist masterpiece.

But how wrong you were! The moment you are on the set the three-legged instrument takes charge. Problems come thick and fast. Where to place the camera? High or low? Near or far? On the dolly or on the ground? Is the thirty-five O.K. or would you rather move back and use the fifty? Get too close to the action and the emotion of the scene spills over; get too far back and the thing becomes cold and remote. To each problem that arises you must find a quick answer. If you delay the sun shifts and makes nonsense of your light continuity.

Sound is a problem, too. Dialogue has been reduced to a minimum, but you want to cut down further. Are these three words really necessary, or can you find a telling gesture to take their place? The critics may well talk of a laudable attempt at a rediscovery of the fundamentals of silent cinema, but you know within your heart that while there may be some truth in that, equally true was your anxiety to avoid the uninspiring business of dubbing and save on the cost of sound film.

Cost, indeed, was a dominant determining factor at all times, influencing the very style of the film. Another important factor—and I wouldn't want to generalise on this—was the human one. In handling my actors I found it impossible to get to that stage of impersonal detachment where I could equate them with so much raw material to be moulded and remoulded at will. How can you make a woman of eighty stand in the hot midday sun and go through the same speech and the same actions over and over again while you stand by and watch with half closed eyes and wait for that precise gesture and tone of voice that will mean perfection for you? This meant, inevitably, fewer rehearsals and fewer takes.

Sometimes you are lucky and everything goes right in the first take. Sometimes it does not and you feel you will never get what you are aiming at. The number of takes increases, the cost goes up, the qualms of conscience become stronger than the urge for perfection and you give up, hoping that the critics will forgive and the audience will overlook. You even wonder whether perhaps you were not being too finicky and the thing was not as bad or as wrong as you thought it was.

And so on and on it goes, this preposterous balancing act, and you keep hoping that out of all this will somehow emerge Art. At times when the strain is too much you want to give up. You feel it is going to kill you, or at least kill the artist in you. But you carry on, mainly because so much and so many are involved, and the day comes when the last shot is in the can and you are surprised to find yourself feeling not happy and relieved, but sad. And you are not alone in this. Everybody, from "Auntie" for whom it has been an exciting

if strenuous comeback after thirty years of oblivion, down to the little urchin who brought the live spiders and the dead toad, shares this feeling.

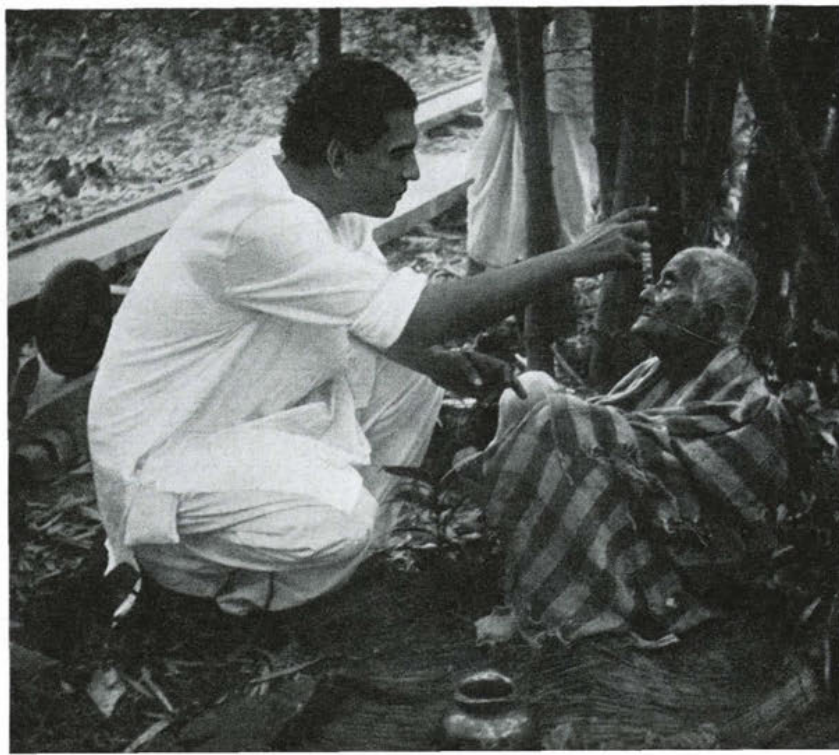
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To me it is the inexorable rhythm of its creative process that makes film-making so exciting in spite of the hardships and the frustrations. Consider this process: you have conceived a scene, any scene. Take the one where a young girl, frail of body but full of some elemental zest, gives herself up to the first monsoon shower. She dances in joy while the big drops pelt her and drench her. The scene excites you not only for its visual possibilities but for its deeper implications as well: that rain will be the cause of her death.

You break down the scene into shots, make notes and sketches. Then the time comes to bring the scene to life. You go out into the open, scan the vista, choose your setting. The rain clouds approach. You set up your camera, have a last quick rehearsal. Then the "take". But one is not enough. This is a key scene. You must have another while the shower lasts. The camera turns, and presently your scene is on celluloid.

Off to the lab. You wait, sweating—this is September—while the ghostly negative takes its own time to emerge. There is no hurrying this process. Then the print, the "rushes". This looks good, you say to yourself. But wait. This is only the content, in bits and pieces, and not the form. How is it going to join up? You grab your editor and rush off to the cutting room. There is a gruelling couple of hours, filled with aching suspense, while the patient process of cutting and joining goes on. At the end you watch the thing on the moviola. Even the rickety old machine cannot conceal the effectiveness of the scene. Does this need music, or is the incidental sound enough? But that is another stage in the creative process, and must wait until all the shots have been joined up into scenes and all the scenes into sequences and the film can be comprehended in its totality. Then, and only then, can you tell—if you can bring to bear on it that detachment and objectivity—if your dance in the rain has really come off.

But is this detachment, this objectivity, possible? You know you worked honestly and hard, and so did everybody else. But you also know that you had to make changes, compromises—not without the best of reasons—on the set and in the cutting room. Is it better for them or worse? Is your own satisfaction the final test or must you bow to the verdict of the majority? You cannot be sure. But you can be sure of one thing: you are a better man for having made it.



Satyajit Ray directing Chunibala in "Pathar Panchali".



AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS



The outsize Todd-AO version of Jules Verne's story is scheduled to open in London later this year. Produced by Michael Todd, directed by Michael Anderson and scripted by S. J. Perelman, the film was shot in 13 countries, runs for nearly three hours, and has been described as the gayest and most spectacular of travelogues.



Above: Phileas Fogg (David Niven) and Passepartout (Cantinflas) about to embark by balloon. Left, above: David Niven and Beatrice Lillie; left, below: Cantinflas, John Carradine and Buster Keaton in a railroad episode; above, Cantinflas as Passepartout. Other players in the main story include Robert Newton (Mr. Fix) and Shirley MacLaine (Princess Aouda), and the supporting cast is made up of some forty stars. 69,894 people and 7,959 animals.

Film Reviews

LUST FOR LIFE

HOLLYWOOD has in its time presented some extravagant accounts of the artistic temperament. One thinks of Cornel Wilde's Chopin cavorting with Merle Oberon's George Sand, of Ida Lupino's Emily Bronte, or, for that matter, of the Brownings as interpreted by Jennifer Jones and Bill Travers in the recent *Barretts of Wimpole Street*. *Lust for Life* (M-G-M), in spite of its cheapjack title, has undoubtedly been planned with considerable seriousness of purpose, a concern to break with this tradition of romantic flummery and falsification. Its producer, John Houseman, and director, Vincente Minnelli, are men of taste and discrimination; and they have made every obvious effort to ensure surface authenticity. Van Gogh's paintings are reproduced in almost overpowering quantity; there are lengthy, and skilfully selected, quotations from his letters; and a proportion of the film was shot on location in Belgium and Provence.

So far, in fact, so good. Minnelli himself is a director with the eye of a painter, or perhaps of a painter *manqué*. His talent, as in *An American in Paris*, is for the elegant pastiche, the stylish near-reproduction. *Lust for Life* is packed with transitions from painting to actuality, from the blazing canvas to the sun-scorched countryside of Provence. One of the sharpest of these carefully calculated effects, though, comes in the earlier scenes, in a single shot of the miners of the Borinage lining up for work that precisely echoes Van Gogh's painting of the prison yard. Generally, these scenes in the mining town, with their misty, greyish lighting, their atmosphere of squalor and dereliction, find the film at its most visually striking. CinemaScope seems far from the ideal shape for the reproduction of paintings, but the inevitable "art film" elements in *Lust for Life* are adequately managed and on occasion revealing in their juxtapositions of the real and the imagined.

But an eye for a picture is not, unhappily, the first prerequisite for a study of Van Gogh. Essentially the film must be an exercise in temperament, an attempt to come dramatically to grips with the problems of artistic creation. By taking their material from Irving Stone's best-selling piece of fictionalised biography, the producer and director have restricted themselves to a certain angle of approach; by employing a scriptwriter, Norman Corwin, with a high reputation as a radio writer but little apparent sense of European idioms and habits of thought, they have added to this initial handicap. Gauguin, visiting Van Gogh at Arles and finding paintings of sunflowers decorating every wall of his room, can only mutter that this reception is "very friendly". Van Gogh, endeavouring to explain the motives driving him to paint, and to paint as he does, can express himself only in the language of the contemporary anti-social rebel. Setting out to avoid vulgarity, the film falls into a banality not very far removed from it. And, as in the case of John Huston's *Moulin Rouge*, one feels that the problem is a fundamental one, that the cultural climate out of which the film has been created is damagingly remote from the subject itself.

Revealing in this context is the episode in which Van Gogh takes up with a washerwoman turned prostitute, a character played by Pamela Brown with a bearing and diction suggesting an Old Vic actress who has fallen on hard times in the Waterloo Road. The scene in which the artist finally breaks with his mistress can be compared with a not dissimilar episode in *The Grasshopper*. In Samsonov's film, the clash of temperaments was dramatically valid and revealing of character; in *Lust for Life*, the scene merely brings arbitrarily to an end a relationship which has in any case amounted to little more than a sentimental excursion into low life. It is the whole difference between the work whose subject is developed from within a tradition, and one in which we continually sense that the material is being assessed in terms of values imposed from outside.

Lust for Life is repeatedly vitiated by this crucial failure in imaginative understanding. The mutilation of the ear is a fearful hurdle to be got over, a sensational climax of the trickiest kind. It need not, though, have been turned into such an affair of mirrored reflections, staring eyes and thundering sound track. The film, in any case, has never sufficiently distinguished between Van Gogh sane and Van Gogh mad, between the fury of creation and the tragic frenzies of insanity. The character is by turns truculent, hysterical and morose: in no mood can he be related to the man revealed in the letters.

Part of the difficulty, inevitably, lies in the casting. Kirk Douglas manages a striking physical resemblance to the best-known of the self-portraits, but his performance has precisely the note of whipped-up hysteria and urgency that has seen him through so many versions of the strictly contemporary neurotic. Again, the failure is mainly a temperamental one. Anthony Quinn's rather surly and loutish portrayal of Gauguin is also a one-level characterisation, though not entirely ill-suited to the film's presentation of Gauguin as a sturdy cynic who neither understands nor approves of Van Gogh's generous emotionalism. These episodes between the two painters—squabbles culminating in tragedy—find the film most handicapped in its attempts to bring off popularisation without undue dishonesty.

Where *Moulin Rouge* was flashily superficial, *Lust for Life* is often painstakingly flat. If one finally prefers Minnelli's film to Huston's, it is because it shows a regard for the facts of Van Gogh's situation that was missing in the misleadingly romanticised account of Lautrec. In both films, though, understanding stops short at much the same point: the connections between the man and his work are never properly made, and the neurotic misfit in society, whom the films can sentimentally pity, is not an artist working in a particular environment but another character out of the Hollywood elementary textbook.

PENELOPE HOUSTON.

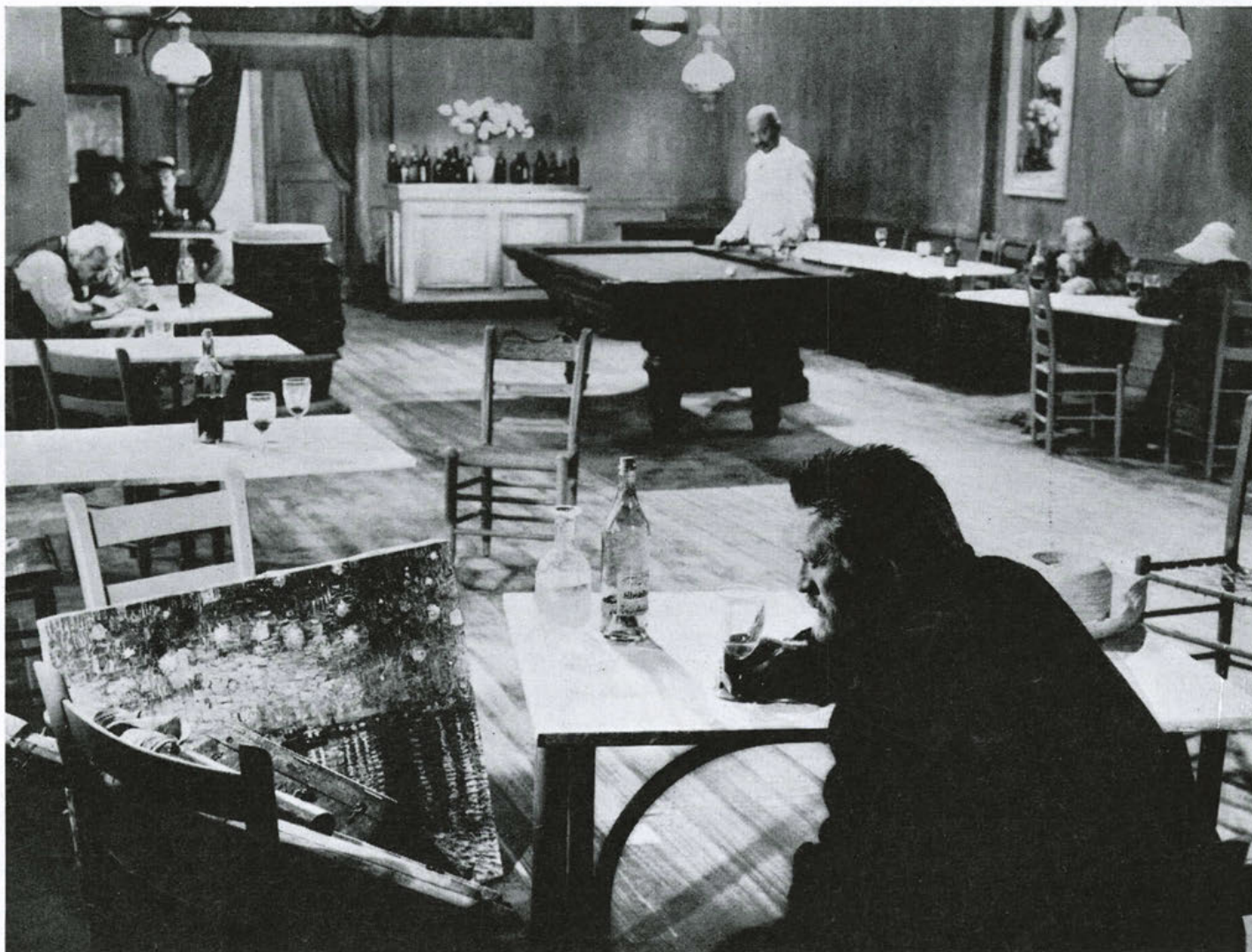
LA TRAVERSEE DE PARIS

TRAVERSEE DE PARIS is not a novel, as mistakenly stated on the credits of the film, but a longish short story by Marcel Aymé, published with other tales in a book entitled *Le Vin de Paris*. In film form, incidentally, it has become *La Traversée de Paris* (Films de France), the added article being a reversion to a literary fashion of a few decades ago. The English title—*Pig Across Paris*—is perhaps more telling, seeming to appeal to British humour as though parading a sort of French-Ealing affair. Although the film is a long way from being that, the story has undergone a certain levelling, a rubbing-down of its sharper edges.

Marcel Aymé is an author with elusive moral standards, a pessimistic ironist with a liking for cranks. He seems a little uncertain as to precisely where his sophisticated character, Grandgil, should stand. A well-to-do devilish dilettante, we see him blackmailing the meat-dealer, provider of the pig, bullying everyone he meets, and doing so for the sake of a sheer aesthetic experience. In the last pages, his anarchistic bitterness is revealed—one might almost say exposed—as lacking any real depth. He stands out, finally, as one of any reader's odd literary encounters, a bulky, lively figure of contrivance. Not that this greatly matters. I, for one, am only too pleased to meet Aymé on his own often vividly whimsical ground. The point here is that Claude Autant-Lara also has about him something of the devilish dilettante outlook, in his case of a Voltairean sort.

Yet by giving this part to Jean Gabin, one feels that he has weakened it and so missed a fine chance. Gabin, who remarkably combines the talents of a fine character actor with an almost fateful screen presence, has recently mellowed considerably. *Il a mis de l'eau dans son vin*. And at the bottom of his impersonation of Grandgil seems to lie middle-aged good nature. We admire his violent displays of temper for the ease with which they are brought about, but the *tour de force* has no emotional conviction behind it and the performance remains artificial and, finally, inadequate.

Grandgil has been introduced to Jamblier, the black-market dealer, by a man named Martin. The latter stands in contrast to Grandgil as a simple-minded, ironic, pathetic figure; as, indeed, a thoroughly well-rounded character. He is a degraded petty bourgeois, fond of self-deception, but insisting on honesty and on work properly done even in his oddest dealings. This thorough workman is well depicted in the original story, when addressing the man who has cut up the pig that must be transported across war-time Paris to a butcher in Montmartre. How much will he get for



"Lust for Life": Kirk Douglas as Van Gogh.

his work? Says Martin: "On the matter of honour, I challenge anyone to be a better man than I am. On the other hand, I am not in a position to make presents to anyone".

The picture's one indisputable success is that it has retained just this quality in Martin. The choice of Bourvil—previously known mostly as a comedian with a Norman peasant background—proves an excellent one. He is shrewd and flabbergasted, humiliated and vengeful, and he consistently achieves the precise quality of naïve stubbornness that the part demands. This well-timed, detailed performance exactly brings off the character of Aymé's story.

After Jamblier (or Jambier, as the film calls him) has been thoroughly humiliated by Grandgil, off go the two men, dodging as best they can the French and German police. The main episodes of Aymé's original have been retained: the insults inflicted on the owners of a small café; the quick beating-up of an awkward policeman; the scene at Grandgil's flat where Martin is made aware of a scale of values hitherto beyond him. Other incidents have been adroitly fitted in by those celebrated adaptors Jean Aurenche and Pierre Bost: the noise of the wild animals smelling meat as the men walk along the Jardin des Plantes; the dogs that pursue them; the worldly young woman who rejoices at the sound of the sirens; and (a neat imaginative touch) Gabin's improvised recitation of a poem by Heine as two more policemen approach. Not bad contrivances within their limitations. But what does it amount to? Although the two actors succeed in encompassing their farcical duo, the undertones of tragi-comedy are largely missing and the picture has failed to take on an edge of its own. If this partly results from the unsatisfactory conception of Gabin's part, it also has a great deal to do with the third, and least satisfactory, section of the film. Here the Germans (an invisible background in the original story) arrest several people as hostages,

including Martin, while allowing Grandgil to go free because he happens to be a painter of some note. From this point, we feel that we are being led astray. The fable of the Devilish Dilettante and the Petty Bourgeois becomes blurred and to some extent pointless. What happens in Aymé's tale is that Martin, the earnest workman who has been led along an incomprehensible path, murders Grandgil. Surely some telling counterpart to this ending should have been sought? And the device of framing the story between shots of German and Allied troops marching up the Champs Elysées can only strike one as the most artificial of concoctions. Finally, there is a postwar epilogue, when Grandgil encounters an aged Martin working as a railway porter. A nice, face-saving afterthought which just does not meet the case.

So we are left with some negative good qualities to praise. The Paris scene is fair enough to all concerned, in its slightly meretricious way. The direction is, with the above qualifications, firmly handled in dramatic terms, though otherwise uninspired. The whole affair, finally, seems more acted than felt.

JEAN QUEVAL.

THE TEAHOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON

THE TEAHOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON (M-G-M) now enjoys an honourable place in many European theatre repertoires. Dealing mainly in the national foibles of two countries, it clearly manages to entertain many more. But it is a light piece, and a talkative one, and spread over two hours in the cinema, without interval breaks, its essential slightness is almost inevitably emphasised. Not very much happens: an army captain is posted

to a remote Okinawan village to set up a good democratic way of life—which will be symbolised by a new schoolhouse built in the shape of the Washington Pentagon. He ends up with a Japanese tea-room and a way of life about as American as the Constitution of the Seventeen Articles drawn up for the Imperial Court in 604.

The mainsprings of the film's humour are Japanese guile and smiling conservatism set against guileless American proselytising zeal; and by the end these are running pretty dry. It is always engaging, though, when a nation is prepared cheerfully to mock its own characteristics, and the situation manages to retain its charm. But only just; for the essential *japanaiserie* of the piece is too often imperilled by the professional insertion, every twenty lines or so, of a surefire, Broadway-style wisecrack.

The adaptation (by John Patrick, from his own play) and direction (Daniel Mann) show no great effort to reshape the material for the screen. There are some long dialogue sequences in which, inevitably, a heavy responsibility falls on the players. The most successful is Marlon Brando as the wily, omniscient and omnipresent guide; a fully-rounded character whose very charm is Japanese. This is a performance of great tact, humour and authority, and one by no means limited to the small and cautious effect: in inflection and gesture (apart from his moment of counting by flicking his fingers outwards, instead of inwards over the thumb in the Japanese manner), it is beautifully worked out and reveals a deeply conscientious artist. Machiko Kyo handles her role—which calls for some rather laborious horseplay—with grace and charm, and there is a performance of lusty brilliance by Nijiko Kiyowaka as the leader of the sturdy village women clamouring for instruction in Geisha refinements. But that is mainly that. The other players—in particular Glenn Ford and Eddie Albert—betray an unhappy tendency in much current American comedy playing: the practice of elevating the comic idea of a scene to an intensity damaging to its actual execution, of informing every line in it with the same degree of comic conviction. Even Katharine Hepburn, without a Cukor to guide her, has recently been guilty of this in *The Iron Petticoat* and *The Rainmaker*. This style of playing conveys a theoretical conception of what is *supposed* to make the scene funny, but it remains theoretical, failing to make the connections with reality that would bring the situation comically to life.

In *Teahouse* there is a particular example of this, a scene worked out to the last degree but failing to raise a smile. The Captain's way of life has become completely Oriental when an investigating officer arrives; after his initial horror at the moral disintegration of his colleague, he himself falls from military grace through his passion for horticulture and the rich promise that the region offers for its practice. The scene, though predictable from the outset, is still humorous. But the actors, hanging on at all costs to its comic content, play with a determination that gives it the air of a technical work-out. Perhaps the trouble lies in the fact that normal film rehearsal conditions do not permit such a complex intellectual approach except under the guidance of a director wholly sympathetic to it. And half-success, in this field, falls infinitely flatter than a coarser and less ambitious rendering of the scene might have done.

DEREK PROUSE

YANGTSE INCIDENT

THE daring escape of H.M.S. frigate *Amethyst*, which in 1949 successfully ran the gauntlet of Chinese Communist guns for 140 miles down the Yangtse, provides the basis for *Yangtse Incident* (British Lion). Produced by Herbert Wilcox, directed by Michael Anderson and scripted by Eric Ambler, the film divides its account of the action into three main sections. A clean, direct drive characterises the opening scenes, showing the bombardment which resulted in the frigate running aground; and realism is heightened by the fact that many scenes were reconstructed in the confined quarters of *Amethyst* herself. Michael Anderson's direction here displays similar qualities to *The Dam Busters*: a documentary attention to detail, a sharp camera and editing style, and an awareness of the human sacrifices demanded by war. But the promise of this opening—admirably photographed in harsh, grey tones by Gordon Dines—is partially dissipated in the central episodes dealing with the protracted negotiations with the Chinese

over responsibility for the "incident". Although the script presumably adheres to basic facts, there is a fatal conventionality in the characterisation of Colonel Peng, the local Communist leader, and the over-calculated menace of Akim Tamiroff's playing does nothing to command belief. With Commander Kerans' decision to attempt a break-out, the story reverts to the style of the opening, and, accompanied by an insistent *nobilmente* march tune, traces *Amethyst's* dash to rejoin the Fleet.

The result, then, is decent, factual, and quietly heroic. In some ways, the film resembles war-time productions such as *San Demetrio*, *London or The Way Ahead*. It does not resemble *Fires Were Started*. This reference to Jennings would be unnecessary and out of place if *The Dam Busters* had not, albeit very occasionally, evoked a mood slightly suggestive of that director. For me, the reason why *Yangtse Incident* fails to advance the achievement of Michael Anderson's earlier film is that he so often seems content to record an emotionally pregnant situation (such as the burying of *Amethyst's* dead) rather than to communicate the quality of an experience. This is not merely a case of phlegmatic British understatement: it suggests a reluctance to overstep the bounds of what has become a sacrosanct tradition. Although it is relatively free from the appalling facetiousness and lower-deck jocularity that marred *The Battle of the River Plate*, there is still something rigid and formulaised about the sailors in *Yangtse Incident*, despite the welcome appearance of a number of unfamiliar players. Their relationships give only a filtered view of service comradeship: there are rather too many heroic close-ups of tense, perspiring faces and not enough oaths, in fact. This reticence is crystallised in Richard Todd's performance as Commander Kerans. Called upon to be quiet, resolute and decisive, he successfully fulfils this conception: the one important thing missing is the man behind the character. Rather more varied and urgent playing can be found among the supporting cast, notably from William Hartnell and Donald Houston.

There seems no reason why the present spate of service films should not continue indefinitely. They are undeniably popular with the public, and there are many famous actions yet unrecorded. *Yangtse Incident*, with its avoidance of sentimental cliché, is in many ways an exciting and respectable tribute. But it adds nothing to what has gone before. The cinema is continually showing us servicemen as they are affected by the demands of combat. Whether one thinks of battle as an exhilarating adventure or a terrible and degrading experience (or even a combination of both), films such as *Fires Were Started*, *A Walk in the Sun*, *They Were Expendable*, *The Unknown Soldier* and *The Red Badge of Courage* endeavour to state an attitude, to express a truth as their makers see it. We have still to find a contemporary British director able and willing to commit himself to an equally personal statement.

JOHN GILLET.



"The Teahouse of the August Moon": Marlon Brando, Machiko Kyo and Glenn Ford.



The two Anastasias: left, Ingrid Bergman and Helen Hayes; right, Lilli Palmer.

THE TWO ANASTASIAS

THE remarkable coincidence of two recent films—*Anastasia* (Fox) and *Is Anna Anderson Anastasia?* (Gala)—both dealing with the same subject, both featuring the same actor (Ivan Desny), and both opening in the same week, is further heightened by the failure of either film to do much more than scratch the surface of an intriguing subject. Both films concern, of course, the controversy over whether Anastasia, daughter of Czar Nicholas II, was actually murdered along with other members of the Russian royal family in 1918, or whether she may have escaped.

The German film, *Is Anna Anderson Anastasia?* is a more or less factual report based on documents produced in the recent German court case brought by Mrs. Anderson in her claim to the title. The producer, Gunter Matern, was given sole rights to the material by the claimant, whose case was dismissed on the grounds of "insufficient evidence". *Anastasia*, American-financed and made partly in Britain, is an expensive (£1,200,000), highly polished and somewhat free version of the Anastasia legend via a play by Marcelle Maurette and a stage adaptation by Guy Bolton. Ultimately, the American film is infinitely more successful in achieving its intended purpose. Its aims are of course less complex; and the whole thing is carried off with a smooth professional assurance that makes the relentlessly solemn approach of the German film look grimmer than it actually is.

A point which neither film makes, however, concerns the actual non-existence of Anastasia's supposed inheritance. Both films indicate that the Czar had deposited large sums of money in a London bank. In fact, the money deposited was transferred back to the safety of the Russian banking houses at the outbreak of the 1914 war, and was subsequently taken over by the Bolshevik Revolutionary Government. "We are doing this for money—not for art", someone says in *Anastasia*. The line echoes back with an ironic ring.

The German film, directed by Falk Harnack, opens with pre-credits action: the scene is the house at Ekaterinburg; the Czar and his family are led from their living quarters to execution; and Anastasia, suffering only from a head wound, is smuggled to

safety by two loyal guards. The film, then, firmly expresses the view that Anna Anderson is Anastasia, despite the question mark of its title. Accepting this, it tells us very little about Anastasia as a person. Although Lilli Palmer gives a sensitive performance, there are few shadings of personality and the character exists on a single note of high melancholy. Her bewilderment and agony are never communicated because of a remoteness in the film's whole emotional tone: one is *with* the picture but not involved in it. Again, a particularly shuffling and inconclusive ending tends to give the material a slightly suspect flavour. Did Anastasia marry the sentry who saved her? Did she bear him a son, and if so what became of him? On whose instructions and on what grounds was she committed to an asylum on her return from America? And why did Princess Cecilie decide to recognise Mrs. Anderson as Anastasia after twenty-three years had passed since their first meeting? If one is going to make a factual film about Mrs. Anderson's claim, then surely all these questions must be answered.

The Anglo-American *Anastasia* shows admirable discretion in its claims. The original play has been somewhat reshaped to suit the range and personalities of its leading players, and the result is a very polished and urbane piece of entertainment. Nothing more—nothing less. The emphasis throughout is on the theatrical, and Anatole Litvak's directorial pacing is built up around a series of neatly constructed dialogue scenes. Anastasia herself serves not so much to direct the flow of the action (as in the German film) but is rather projected into the centre of it by the will of others. A destitute amnesiac, she is schooled and groomed by General Bounine (Yul Brynner) in order to make a claim to the Czar's inheritance. The girl (Ingrid Bergman) manages to convince Anastasia's grandmother, the formidable dowager empress, but on the eve of a ball held in her honour, the claimant deserts the reception for life with Bounine . . .

Ingrid Bergman credibly conveys the pathos of the claimant's situation, Yul Brynner gives another variation on the arrogant male, and the whole film has a confident production gloss almost reminiscent of the old-style Hollywood of the 'thirties. Particularly pleasing is some of Jack Hildyard's soft-focus camera work and the beguiling romantic waltz theme by Alfred Newman.

The German film ends with the words, "To die twice in one life-time should satisfy everyone". The American film ends on, "Go home, the play is over". That effectively sums up the distinction between these two screen Anastasias.

JOHN CUTTS.

THE WRONG MAN

A GOOD deal of Alfred Hitchcock's interest in film-making seems these days to consist in setting himself technical problems for the satisfaction of overcoming them. In *Rear Window*, he experimented with the single set and, as an additional refinement, the single point of vision; in *To Catch a Thief*, he developed the planned anti-climax, the scene that looks serious until the joke is revealed. In *The Wrong Man* (Warners), Hitchcock has filmed his first true story, a precise and documented account of a case of mistaken identity. The problem here is to achieve a particular atmosphere of factual suspense, a spider's web entanglement of circumstantial detail enmeshing the bewildered and passive victim.

Manny Balestrero, a quiet, unassuming New Yorker who played in the band at the Stork Club, was arrested four years ago, after an innocent call at his local insurance office, when he was positively identified by numerous witnesses as a hold-up man. Sent for trial and unable to prove an alibi, Balestrero eventually escaped through the quite fortuitous arrest of the real criminal. But meanwhile his wife, neurotically blaming herself for her husband's misfortunes, had cracked under the strain and been sent to an asylum.

All this actually happened, and the whole method of Hitchcock's film, with its location shooting and careful precision of detail, is designed to involve the audience in an account that is both factual and subjective. The opening brilliantly unites the ordinary and the sinister: the jangle of the Stork Club, the journey home from work, the patrolling policemen in the night streets, the suppressed panic in the insurance office, and the actual moment of arrest, as Balestrero stands hesitating on the pavement, looking up at the lighted windows of his home and back towards the dark bulk of the police car. These scenes give Hitchcock the sort of material that has always most engaged his talent: the undercurrent of fear and tension beneath the aggressively normal surface. After Balestrero's arrest, he develops what he has himself called "the drama of being handcuffed, the special terror of being tied up". The laconic and impersonal procedure of the police questioning, the handcuffing and fingerprinting, the claustrophobic ride in the police van, are treated with a harsh and heavy emphasis, a record of an experience that seems remote even while it is happening because to the victim it is not yet entirely real. Henry Fonda, whose performance throughout is held to a single note of anguished endurance, conveys precisely this sense of shock and confusion,



Ian Carmichael in "Brothers in Law".

of a man walking uncomprehendingly through a nightmare.

After this gripping and splendidly circumstantial opening, the film's extreme slowness becomes an increasing dramatic liability. The defence lawyer (Anthony Quayle), though introduced with a certain flourish, has little more control over events than the defeated Balestrero. The wife's collapse into insanity is developed in such a way that we feel the intention of pathos rather than the real agony of her situation; and Vera Miles, seen wanly cowering through a series of held close-ups, is not helped by a script (by Maxwell Anderson and Angus McPhail) which demands such an abrupt transition from bustling sanity to inert surrender. The dramatic thread has broken somewhere in the middle of the film, and Hitchcock can no longer effectively tighten the screw of suspense.

In some of these later scenes, one even begins to wonder whether Hitchcock has not come slightly under the spell of those French intellectual critics who are always reading deeply symbolic interpretations into his work, finding a fatal mystical fascination in *I Confess* or *Under Capricorn*. The master has given them some additional ammunition here. During the court scene, notably, as the camera moves from Fonda's stare of resolute desperation to a close-up of the rosary he is clutching, we have the impression not that we are being shown a deeply religious man, but that Hitchcock believes he is communicating a spiritual experience. But Hitchcock is not Graham Greene, and his crises of conscience need to be resolved dramatically and in action. It is action that the second half of *The Wrong Man* lacks, and with this director nothing else ever seems entirely to work.

PENELOPE HOUSTON.

THE GREAT MAN (*Universal-International*) is unlike most of Hollywood's recent exposures in achieving its effects through cynicism rather than sensationalism. It is tough (sometimes, as in the pseudo-Chandler opening, rather over-consciously tough), ruthless and disturbing. Joe Harris (Jose Ferrer), an Amalgamated Broadcasting commentator, has four days in which to produce a memorial "portrait in sound" of Herb Fuller, America's favourite radio and TV personality. Interviews with Fuller's associates confirm what Harris half-suspected—that the Great Man was vicious and corrupt. Fuller's former manager plans to ease Harris into his programme; but when Harris discovers that Fuller's best known broadcast, an appeal for blood donors from a battle in Germany, was a complete fake, he substitutes the true story of Fuller for his intended eulogy. Carleton, Amalgamated's

"The Wrong Man": Henry Fonda.

President, refuses to cut him off the air: in an ironically double-edged denouement he suggests that integrity, too, can be sold to the public.

Although the script, closely adapted from a novel by Al Morgan, seems finally more suited to radio than the cinema, the film makes its impact through a series of terse and sometimes savage dialogue scenes. The atmosphere of the radio company is swiftly established and consistently held. Carleton expresses his impatience with people who speak of radio as an art rather than a business; the concern of everyone at Amalgamated is to give the public what they think it wants while despising audiences for their taste; "the great unwashed" seems a favourite phrase. The consequences of this philosophy are made depressingly clear; and the implications behind Carleton's attitude to Harris's eventual honesty are so alarming that the scene could almost be the opening to another and more horrifying film. Harris himself, a radio journalist clinging to the remnants of his integrity, is a fairly authentic figure, though hardly the complete hero that the film suggests. (Listening to some edited tape recordings which completely reverse the meaning of his interviews, he congratulates the cutter on a fine job).

Static direction and inferior camerawork make *The Great Man* visually unrewarding. But some of the interviews—with the station manager who gave Fuller his first job, with a schoolgirl in the chapel where Fuller lies in state—are tellingly done. And Ferrer has won some extraordinarily good playing from his cast, while his own almost negative style is not incompatible with the characterisation of Harris. Julie London, Dean Jagger, Keenan Wynn and Ed Wynn are efficiently convincing, Russ Morgan contributes a frighteningly plausible sketch as Fuller's bandleader, and Joanne Gilbert makes an impression in the tiny part of Harris's secretary.—DEREK HILL.

THE YOUNG STRANGER (*RKO-Radio*) is in the direct line from *Rebel Without a Cause*: an account of parent-child relationships, of responsibilities consciously or unconsciously shirked. In this case, the father's success (he is a Hollywood producer) is the main alienating factor; it alienates him not only from his son but from his wife: "I've been thinking of divorcing you for five years", she informs her husband, without bitterness, at his first accessible moment after trouble has cracked his facade.

Much of the drama is persuasive enough, with the exception of some climactic moments which illustrate a current trend in these dramas of long-standing psychic disorders—the madness of the wife in *The Wrong Man* is another recent example. The development hinges on psychologically accurate progressions which, though true to the text-book, lack a persuasive dramatic force on the screen. The secret growth of neurosis is naturally inaccessible to ninety minutes screen traffic; and the statement of its consequences, however authoritatively made, is bound to lack weight and plausibility.

In *The Young Stranger*, the teen-age hero annoys a cinema customer and lands up in gaol after a brawl with the manager. His father refuses to believe his truthful account of the way the manager provoked him, and this sets up a dangerous psychic agitation. Things go from bad to worse, from veiled resentment to surly overt outbursts, until, trying to extract the true story of the brawl from the cinema manager, the boy again manhandles him. Happily, the police sergeant, previously belligerent, is vouchsafed a timely moment of benign insight, and a bout of straight talking restores father and son (not to mention mother) to mutual and healthy respect.

But between these main plot signposts, which seem abrupt and contrived, and some eccentric character work *raté* (the giggling juvenile delinquent at the police station is an embarrassing offender), are some fresh and interesting nuances of behaviour. There is a real attempt to convey the dry routine to which the expression of genuine affection is often reduced through the pressures of preoccupations and careers. There is an awareness of the distances suddenly found to exist between people who have complacently taken their intimacy for granted. And there are one or two moments of telling visual symbolism: the family row at the dinner table, for instance, when the son strides out in baffled rage leaving the parents sitting far apart at either end of the wide screen,

also baffled but forlornly so. There is also some gratifying playing. From Kim Hunter, a performance timed with a realistic accuracy that only a sympathetic director could promote; from James Daly as the husband, who manages to convey his sense of guilt—crudely dramatised though it often is—and still remain a believable and sympathetic human being; and from James MacArthur as the son, a deeply sincere characterisation, vulnerable, private, but mercifully free from fashionable mannerism. The director, John Frankenheimer, and writer, Robert Dozier, are both newcomers from television; and James MacArthur also starred in their original TV version of the story. This is another example of the increasingly close relationship between films and television in America, and an encouraging one.—DEREK PROUSE.

BROTHERS IN LAW (*British Lion*) brings off a neat double for the Boulting Brothers. Mildly iconoclastic, in the manner of *Private's Progress*, it investigates the hazards of a legal career with considerable geniality and some sense that the law, if not an ass, has some moderately asinine practitioners. The young barrister, newly called to the Bar and blundering his way irresolutely towards a professional training, is a type of the contemporary hero. His embarrassments, inevitably, are social as well as professional; he is at once innocent and disillusioned. Ian Carmichael, although he still conveys a slightly over-sophisticated awareness of just how he is scoring comic points, is a stylish and likeable light comedian; and in smaller parts one notes Eric Barker's sharply confident playing as the clerk and Miles Malleon's Dickensian caricature of a bumbling and harassed Q.C. Henry Cecil's book, which the script quite closely follows, built up a series of legal anecdotes on the most arbitrary foundation of plot and characterisation. The film gives the young barrister a fairly standardised background—the rather too well-furnished flat, in an anonymous quarter of London, the varnished model girl friend—but achieves in its court scenes the book's quality of urbane extravagance, its appreciation of the jarring encounters between the perfectly regulated legal machine and the fallible individual. The witness who will answer nothing but leading questions, the woman who loses her divorce action, are permissible caricatures; and the scenes in which they appear, like that in which the hero discovers his mother serving on the jury before which he must argue a case, combine exaggeration and plausibility in the style of the good professional anecdote. Out of court, the film is less amusing, its definition less precise. But much of *Brothers in Law* is brisk, confident and genuinely funny. It shows John and Roy Boulting, producer and director respectively, in good training for their latest assignment, *Lucky Jim*, provided that here they can look more toughly and directly at the contemporary scene.—PENELOPE HOUSTON.

FULL OF LIFE (*Columbia*). Judy Holliday's second film for Richard Quine is a serio-comic study of a young, mildly impoverished suburban couple shortly expecting their first child. The theme sounds promising, suggesting opportunities for something after the style of *The Marrying Kind*. Here, though, neither script (by John Fante) nor direction have the tact and sensibility that this sort of material seems to need. Quine's brash and rather impersonal handling appears almost at odds with the film's lightly sentimental mood, and even Judy Holliday's playing of the expectant mother, a characteristically beguiling mixture of scatterbrain and mild neurotic, cannot bridge the gap. The worried husband, moody and unintentionally callous, is rather conventionally sketched in, and impassively played by Richard Conte; and this failure by a comedy team which looked highly encouraging robs the material of an essential edge.

After developing the situation between the couple, the film arrives at its denouement through the agency of the husband's father, a mercurial Italian stonemason played by Salvatore Baccaloni with blatant theatrical emphasis. Having never regarded their original civil contract as binding, he persuades the couple to remarry in church, a conclusion which in this context strikes a rather jarring note of sham sentimentality. *Full of Life*, with its uneven writing and playing, is a disappointment in view of the sympathetic talents at work on it; in particular, Richard Quine's technique, undeniably assured in other fields, seems over-strident for this sort of light-weight domestic study.—RUPERT BUTLER.

LA TERRA TREMA



"La Terra Trema": the last act. "... Now the Valastros have nothing left, nothing but their eyes to weep with ... And one day 'Ntoni goes down to the shore to have another look at his boat ..."

Luchino Visconti's film about Sicily, made by the Communists and meant to rouse the Italian rich to action on behalf of the poorest fishermen ... had dragged out its interminably sordid "shots" for nearly three hours when many of the critics became thoroughly bored with it ... Italian realism is tending to turn all Italian films into monotonous documentaries. (*Manchester Guardian* report on the showing of *La Terra Trema* at the Venice Festival, 1948.)

THERE are two good reasons for "rediscovering" Luchino Visconti's *La Terra Trema*. Until the recent National Film Theatre showing, the film had been known in this country—in so far as it was known at all—only in a version dubbed into Italian, and drastically cut down from its

original two-and-three-quarter hour running time to what the Italian distributors regarded as more commercial proportions. With the original Sicilian dialogue suppressed, and a total of about forty-five minutes missing, this version sacrificed much of the film's atmosphere, its tempo and tonality. Seeing it in this form, one could have only a vague idea of the picture's real quality. Moreover, *La Terra Trema* belongs to that range of films whose innovations are so striking that they demand, in a sense, the perspective of time. It is almost ten years since Visconti made this picture, yet it still seems too soon for anything in the nature of a final judgment. All the same, it must be recognised that a particular epoch in the neo-realist cinema has now ended, whatever the reasons may be. *La Terra Trema* belongs to a period already



Last meeting between Nicola, the bricklayer, and Mara. "From now on", he says, "your window will always be closed . . . just as my heart is closed".

past, but one worth revisiting because the themes and methods of the neo-realist film-makers remain as relevant now as they were ten years ago.

With *La Terra Trema*, Visconti developed the neo-realist approach to a dramatic subject in its most extreme form: the players, the lines they speak, the places they live in, the whole social background and motivation, depart hardly at all from reality. We shall see later how this "real" scene was re-thought and re-interpreted by the director. First, though, some details are necessary.

Visconti originally went to Sicily for a few weeks, with the idea of filming a short documentary; later, probably through his discovery of the problems of the island, and the imaginative response they aroused in him, his original project was transformed into an adventure not unlike that of Eisenstein in Mexico. The film he then proposed was to be in three parts, dealing with the struggles of the fishermen, the peasants and the miners to achieve freedom from economic exploitation. These three episodes, three stories following roughly parallel lines, would have made up a single work. Sicily gave Visconti a particular setting; and above all it presented a special kind of social problem: the condition of the workers and peasants in a society still to some extent feudal. It was these conditions that aroused the polemicist in Visconti, giving him the opportunity to put forward a solution in line with his general left-wing position. But *La Terra Trema*, because it ends on an apparent defeat, was not unanimously approved by Italian left-wing critics.

Visconti experienced all kinds of difficulties, and was able to complete only the first of his three episodes—that of the sea—which he expanded into a whole film. This was shot entirely on location, in the little fishing village of Aci Trezza, from the beginning of November, 1947, to the end of May, 1948.

2

The basis of the story is Giovanni Verga's novel *I Malavoglia*—and Visconti's film remains surprisingly true to the letter of this original, however far it departs from it in spirit. *I Malavoglia* is a detailed and sombre study of the ruin of a family of fishermen, the disasters brought about by their own maladroitness attempts to better their condition. "This sincere and dispassionate study", as Verga described it in his preface,

seems to have been an end in itself for the novelist. He gives the reader a picture of a certain kind of life, but he is not concerned with suggesting solutions to the problems he raises. Many of the characters and situations of the film, as well as some of the dialogue and some passages in the Italian commentary, come directly from the novel, whose action is also set in the village of Trezza. But in Visconti's film all these elements serve another purpose. The artist is no longer content with the role of the objective, dispassionate observer: rather, he organises the facts of the situation for his own purpose, giving them their central place in his thesis.

Three quarters of a century separate the characters of *I Malavoglia* from the Valastro family of Visconti's film, and the two works in themselves sum up a period of historical change. Fatalism has given way to a struggle whose ends and means can now be clearly defined. The clearest example of this passage of time, from naturalism to neo-realism, can be found in the shift in the central character (in the novel it is the father, in the film the young nephew) and in the very different attitude he takes. The grandfather, who in the film symbolises the past, is an authentic Verga character. He is all for accepting things as they are; he represents a kind of antiquated "wisdom"; he talks only in proverbs which sound false and meaningless to his young relations. When the family leave for Catania to mortgage the house, so that they can go into business on their own account, he is asleep in his chair and must be pulled out of it to follow them. When their fishing tackle is lost in the storm, he is the first to realise the probable consequences since he has had so little faith in the enterprise. Later, when the younger brother, Cola, goes away, the old man is finished.

'Ntoni, the film's hero, is essentially a character developed by Visconti. He is the first to understand the methods of the dealers in the fish market, to realise just how the fishermen are being exploited by these middlemen. Though he makes only clumsy efforts to break the economic stranglehold, though his revolt ends in failure, it would be wrong to regard the film's conclusion as a wholly pessimistic one. *La Terra Trema* is not just the story of a defeat, but of the lessons learnt from defeat; and if 'Ntoni's ultimate victory has no place within the framework of the film, it is because Visconti has been careful not to anticipate events. 'Ntoni knows why he has failed, as his final dialogue with the little girl makes apparent*: he sees clearly what is at stake. In the novel,

* "... One day, though, people will understand that I was right. Then they will realise that the things that have happened to me, the losses I've suffered, have a meaning for them. We must learn to help each other, to work together. It is only then that we will be able to go forward".



Lucia, the younger sister.



"... One day, though, people will understand that I was right. Then they will realise that the things that have happened to me, the losses I've suffered, have a meaning for them. . ."



'Ntoni has finally to leave the village, where there is no longer any place for him. But in the film, preparing to return to work, he looks up at the sky and says to his sister: "Good fishing weather". Then, on the boat, a shot of 'Ntoni's face, resolute and determined, gives way to the final image: the fishing boats cut through the water, the sound track takes up the beat of the oars. Irresistibly, we have the sense of a movement forwards. "Get this into your head", 'Ntoni has said earlier to his brother, "it is here that we must stay and fight". So the impression left by the film is of an adventure begun rather than an attempt defeated.

3

Where Verga's novel is fatalistic, the film shows the working of the economic machine, the techniques of exploitation. The dealers, the middle-men, as a result play a more sizeable part in Visconti's film than in the novel. All the factors of the drama are immediately crystallised in this economic problem, which becomes the axis on which the whole film turns. Economic problems, however, are also and inevitably social problems, particularly in a community so dependent on tradition, so bound mentally and emotionally to the past. Although Visconti has not overtly emphasised these traditional aspects of Sicilian life, they run through the film like an undercurrent, a motive force never far beneath the surface. We see, for instance, no religious ceremonies, but we are constantly aware of the strength of religious feeling in the community. 'Ntoni's enterprise is regarded by the old women as a defiance of the divine will. "God has punished you", one of them says to him after the Valastros' defeat, "and because of your pride you have become the lowest family in Trezza". "You get used to injustice", say the old people, "it becomes a habit". When the Valastros go to Catania to set up their fishing business, "No-one follows them, since when you are poor you are also frightened: there is always worse to come". And Mara, the sister, facing the disaster that has struck them, sees it only as "the Will of God".

Resignation to poverty as part of the natural order of things, fear of any change—one can see where these feelings originate. If rebellion is sacrilege, then suffering and poverty come as a punishment, are somehow shameful. After the catastrophe of the storm, the women stay shuttered within the house, hiding from the eyes of the village. Eviction from their home, the forced sale of their possessions, comes as the final humiliation: it is this defeat rather than mere hunger

that forces 'Ntoni to swallow his pride, to go back to work for the dealers. Love is equally subject to social law, and it is not simply a difference in income that separates Nicola, the bricklayer, from Mara, both when she seems likely to become rich and again when she faces the extreme of poverty.

The script, then, defines a pattern of interlocking social and economic forces which set a series of events in motion: once this process is started, the wheels turn automatically, the dramatic devices merely accelerating the working of the machinery. Once the characters and initial situation are established—'Ntoni's revolt, the setting up of the family business, its failure after the storm—the other disasters that strike the Valastros all follow logically and inevitably. The family's slow disintegration is not something imaginatively plotted by the screen-writer; instead, it results from a close analysis of the way in which a society, in a given set of circumstances, will reject those who try to resist its laws. Above all, it can deprive them of their only defence: the right to work. Afraid of going against the dealers, the other fishermen refuse to give Valastro employment; they have not learnt the need for solidarity, but are governed by their fear of losing what little they have.

The Valastros now become the victims of those always ready to exploit suffering. Forced to sell their last few barrels of fish, they must take any price offered them. The younger brother, Cola, weary of his aimless and destitute existence, emigrates illegally, victim of a racketeer who finds the village the ideal territory for his operations. As for the sister, Lucia, she lets herself be seduced by Don Salvatore, the village policeman, rather than face the prospect of a drab, poverty-enforced spinsterhood. 'Ntoni, for his part, can find friends only among the idlers who hang about the local bars. Finally, when the family can no longer meet its obligations, the bank has to seize the house itself. Meanwhile, the elders take refuge in a dour and sorrowful silence, and the children helplessly look on at disaster. Earlier, when his associates showed some concern at 'Ntoni's first successes, the chief dealer reassured them: "As the worm says to the stone, give me time and I will bore a hole in you".

As can be seen, the script owes more to dialectic—to, it could be said, dialectical materialism—than to the working of imagination. It is an object lesson, even if superficially it seems an object lesson in failure. It is not surprising to learn that such a script was composed on the spot, day by day. As Visconti has himself said, it would have been preposterous to write these dialogues in a Roman drawing-room; and,

at the same time, only deep and direct knowledge of the subject could make such a narrative feasible.

The film's characters, as a result, have nothing extraordinary about them. That they are put to the service of a particular thesis does not detract from their truth, nor the verisimilitude of what happens to them. They are, essentially, types representative of the society that has created them.

4

I said earlier that Visconti here developed neo-realist methods to their extreme limits. The same characteristic appears in the actual technique of the film, at least in the particular rhythm he has given it. This extreme slowness is not simply something designed to give the picture its special grandeur, its almost majestic pace. It may in the end achieve this effect, but its primary purpose is unpromisingly to re-create the movement of life itself, to give to even the slightest gesture its proper duration and so its due significance and meaning. It should not be deduced from this, however, that the style of the film is a documentary one. *La Terra Trema* is not simply a fictionalised documentary on the lives of Sicilian fishermen. Its slow pacing, which permits it to explore situations so thoroughly, also serves a dramatic demand. This is most apparent in the second half of the film, when the sombre rhythms seem to suggest the whole weight of time, the oppressive burden of despair. Particularly notable is the long and admirable scene, cut from the Italian version, of the conversation between the two brothers before Cola's departure.

Visconti, obviously enough, is not concerned only with the daily life of the village but with the moral and social situation of the people of Trezza. The actual work of fishing, for instance, is only suggested; the return of the men, coming back exhausted to their homes or going to the fish market to see what becomes of the fruits of their labour, is described at length. Similarly, when the Valastros and their friends salt their own fish for the first time, the emphasis is on their delight and triumph rather than the work itself.

This method of allowing actions to develop at their natural pace, rather than breaking them up for reconstruction in the cutting room, also indicates the director's steady control over the feelings he wants to express. He never allows emotion to take a free hand; he rejects the tactics by which the cinema habitually magnifies emotion, the underlining through a sharp editing technique. Sentimentality is

rigorously excluded, and the film consistently addresses itself to the mind rather than the heart. (This, incidentally, is particularly noticeable in the treatment of the dealers, the exploiters, where the characterisation is wholly free from hatred.) Visconti is not here presenting an impassioned anecdote: he is painting a social fresco on a grand scale. The passion is there, certainly, but it is in the idea rather than its expression, and if the film seems detached it is simply because Visconti has taken that step backwards which enables the artist to see his subject in a true perspective. Detachment, in effect, amounts here to mastery of the material: the "real" scene has been interpreted in order to give us its essence. And the fact that almost every shot has been planned as an aesthetic composition does not mean that the emphasis is negatively picturesque. Rather, it establishes for us the quality of the setting and the people. We feel the presence of man in every shot—even in those few from which, literally speaking, he is absent.

It is difficult to write about *La Terra Trema* without mentioning G. R. Aldo's part in its achievement. Aldo, whose first film this was, had previously worked in the theatre as a still photographer. Although this detail is significant, it would be a mistake to assume from it that the camerawork is over-indulged, allowed to become an end in itself. Without insisting on the technical skill needed to achieve such depth of focus within the confining walls of the little houses, or the takes lasting several minutes with complex camera movements in three directions, it is important to note that every shot is so designed as to extract the maximum value from its subject. Through this precise, direct composition, the whole setting comes to life for us. This impression is further strengthened by the composition of the sound track, the use of natural sounds and voices and the striking use of background sound to give an additional impression of depth to the images. The whole film vibrates with life, and in this sense Visconti makes positive his own statement: "The cinema that interests me is the anthropomorphic cinema".

Finally, the problem of the playing is posed and resolved in the same line. Visconti did not want merely to use non-professional players: he wanted his film to be acted by the fishermen of Trezza themselves. The distinction is between the usual method of using amateurs, mainly with the object of "deglamorising" the actor, and a method closer to that of documentary. Here again, though, the handling of the actors falls into line with the whole approach of the film: the transition is from pure realism to the most conscious stylistic refinement.

The director employing non-professionals can normally profit from their inexperience, letting his camera catch the spontaneous moment of truth. The casting of *La Terra Trema* was obviously carefully considered, and the fact that the actors were going through familiar actions clearly made their task easier. At the same time, the film's style, the sheer length of the shots and the part played by the dialogue, meant that the players had genuinely to act. They had to relive their daily life on the screen, and also to give it dramatic substance. Visconti's methods equally ruled out any possibility of covering up defects later, building up a dramatic effect in the editing. One can imagine the extraordinary efforts demanded of both the players and the director, but it is nonetheless in this field that one notes the film's occasional weaknesses. The actors sometimes seem handicapped by the strict dramatic framework to which they must conform. This is merely a point of detail; and the final impression is of the extraordinary depth of humanity and feeling conveyed by these non-professionals. The director's demands appear

(Continued on page 223)



After the storm: "... The debts must now be paid, says the grandfather, but 'Ntoni and his younger brothers have not yet taken in the full extent of the disaster'".

ART FILMS

BY JOHN READ

PATRICK HAYMAN

SINCE 1951, John Read has made twelve documentary films concerned with the lives of British painters and sculptors. In these film records, he sets out primarily to present a visual biography of the individual artist, and at the same time clearly to indicate the relationship between his environment and his creative work. The films were all made for BBC Television (in association with the Educational Television and Radio Centre of the U.S.A.) and were initially designed to communicate to a television audience.

Each of the films runs for about thirty minutes, and I understand that they were economically made, at an approximate cost of £3,000. In all cases they were originally shot on 35 mm. stock for transmission in the Corporation's regular evening programmes, and they are all in black-and-white. The cost would ordinarily have been higher but for the fact that the work was done by BBC technicians using the resources and equipment of their own organisation, and usually employing a crew of only two or three people. Read has himself been both scriptwriter and director on all but two of the films—Basil Taylor wrote the script for *Artists Must Live* (1953) and Reg Groves for *Black on White* (1954). Certain characteristics required by television, such as the considerable use of close-ups and infrequent use of long shots, are evident in the films, and the policy of allowing the artist time to talk and to explain his ideas makes generally for lengthy sequences and a rather leisurely editing style. The films as a rule have only one showing on TV, often at a rather late hour in the evening; distribution (on 16 mm.) is made overseas through the British Council and in this country through the Arts Council and the British Film Institute.

* * *

Read's latest film, that on L. S. Lowry, which I saw recently in an incomplete stage, presents this seventy-year old Lancashire painter with great understanding and candour. He is seen in his small, old house or walking the cramped streets of the Lancashire industrial towns. The motifs that were the starting point of many of his pictures, the bizarre factory townscapes of the industrial North, the small figures of people going to and from work, the gaunt buildings and little houses, all these imponderable dreams of the human soul, are humbly celebrated by Lowry and brought into the circle of our consciousness. Read has brought to the film a remarkable sympathy for Lowry's work and a real understanding of the environment from which his imagery is drawn. The paintings themselves, beautifully clear and strong tonally, show to great advantage on the screen. The camera brings out the dark heaviness of his buildings, the movement of people, and the whites and greys of street and sky. One of



L. S. Lowry's painting "The Black Tower", reproduced in John Read's film about the artist. Photograph by permission of the Arts Council.

the most charming sequences shows Lowry at work on a painting, entirely absorbed in the business of putting paint to canvas. The magic of this mysterious occupation comes across in a splendidly satisfying way, as the painting itself grows and changes under the joyful brush of the artist.

Stanley Spencer is the subject of two of Read's most successful films, made in 1956. This uniquely talented painter has lived and worked throughout most of his life in his birthplace, the village of Cookham, and has drawn much of his imagery from these surroundings. He has made real in terms of the humble and everyday the great religious stories of the Bible; and in this connection one thinks particularly of works such as the magnificent "Christ Teaching at Cookham Regatta". In the first of Read's films, Spencer is seen at work in his cottage, which itself figures in several of his religious paintings, as indeed does much of the life around, being translated from its prosaic existence into another and more extraordinary world. Spencer himself appears before the camera in both films. Talking calmly about painting, and expressing his ideas with charm and simplicity, he draws the onlooker into his world and makes evident the concepts and feelings lying behind the techniques of his craft.

The second Spencer film shows the artist uprooted by two wars. We are shown the work inspired by his experience of soldiering in Mesopotamia, and the subsequent achievement which sprang from it in the Sandham Memorial Chapel at Burghclere. Here Spencer worked for three years, covering the little chapel with murals which represent perhaps his finest work. In the Second World War, Spencer was a war artist on Tyneside, and here he celebrated the life of the shipyard towns through his drawings and paintings of

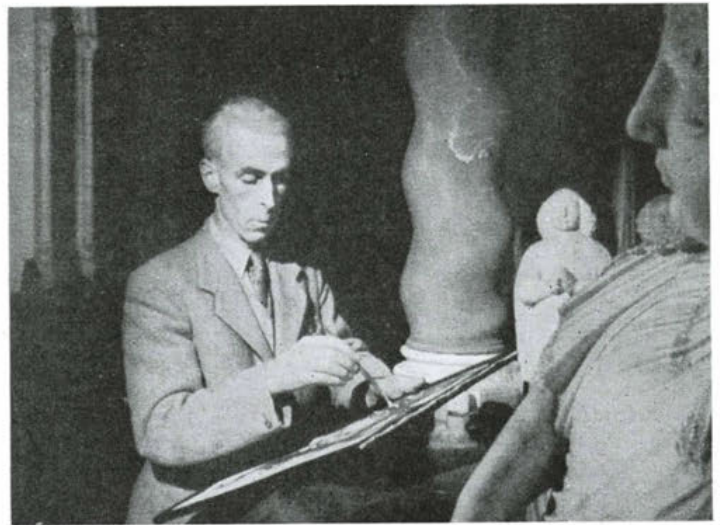
shipyard-workers, welders and riveters.

These two films, which were made together as a single operation, make up a faithful biography in visual terms, a valuable documentary record of an artist's personality and his life's work.

The romantic artists, John Piper and Graham Sutherland, are both subjects of films by Read. We see Piper painting at Portland, recording its strange, abstract imagery of stone and derelict machinery, its lonely coast and forgotten houses. Or we see him at work on an aquatint in his studio near Henley. Sutherland appears in a Welsh valley, in a narrow lane between hills where his pre-war poetic landscapes were born; and again more recently at Antibes, where ferocious insects and strange plants make up the exotic imagery of his post-war work. In both these films, Read is concerned to emphasise the background and characteristics of the artists concerned. Piper is encountered wandering in churches and drawing from religious carvings, or walking in romantic countrysides. Sutherland's complex personality, his later preoccupation with sin and redemption, his thorns and crucifixes, are shown in a tense atmosphere, lit in the film's later sequences by the harsh light of the Mediterranean. The Sutherland film was awarded second prize for Films on Painting at the Venice Festival, 1954.

Read's splendid film on Walter Sickert, made in 1954, shows the work done by this remarkable, and still strongly influential, artist in Camden Town, at Dieppe and in Venice. The Camden Town and Mornington Crescent paintings, strongly expressive of London, live with us yet and come across in the film with great force and clarity. The streets and cafés of present-day Dieppe seem scarcely changed since Sickert painted them fifty years ago: we are shown the Café des Tribunaux (subject of a painting which now hangs in the Tate Gallery), the church and market of the old town. Read here conveys this artist's love of buildings, whether the drab architecture of the slums or the suns and shadows of palaces, and manages also to suggest his subtle feeling for people seen in their everyday environment.

Discovery of a Landscape (1955) was an evocative film about the English Lakes, skilfully showing the interaction of poet and painter, of topographical artist and eighteenth century writer. *Artists Must Live*, made in 1953 and scripted by Basil Taylor, introduced a number of painters, among them Patrick Heron, Keith Vaughan, Ivon Hitchens and John Piper. The film explores the relationship between artist and patron, a particularly difficult one today, and is unusual in that it concerns itself with a group of artists and their problems.



Artist and environment: "... John Piper is encountered wandering in churches and drawing from religious carvings".

In 1955 Read made a film about the Wallace Collection and another on *The English Country Church*. In the previous year he had directed *Black on White*, tracing the history of English cartoonists from Rowlandson's bawdy, bucolic and grand creations to the present day, and emphasising the political influence of the cartoonist from Gillray to Low. Before this, as one of his first productions, Read had made a study of the work of Henry Moore, awarded first prize for Films on Sculpture at Venice, 1951.

John Read now has a growing number of art films to his credit, and as introductions to artists and their work they are both more personal and more individual than is usually the case. The artist, as in the two Spencer films, is allowed considerable freedom in presenting his own work and ideas to the public. This method, developed by Read over some years and a dozen films, provides, I believe, justification for many films yet to be made. It is of course his strength and his weakness: a strength in dealing with the small television screen, where the directness and intimacy of his approach to the artist scores heavily; a possible weakness when undue stress is laid on the artist's personality, or when that personality fails clearly to make its impression.

In the case of the Lowry film, the method brilliantly justifies itself, and it seems to me that this is also the case with the Spencer films. I occasionally felt a certain strain in the Sutherland picture, where less time might have been given to the artist himself and more to the environment from which his work has been drawn. The film on John Piper achieves a more successful synthesis of the man, his surroundings and his work.

While I do not really believe that it is possible to make art "popular", in the sense of arousing the interest of a mass audience, I do think that many more people than is at present the case in Britain have potentially the ability to experience joy and pleasure in the visual arts. When, as they do at their best, these films illumine the artist himself in relation to his hopes and ambitions, and show the imagery on which he draws, then it seems that they can appeal on two levels, both to the unsophisticated public of the mass medium, who find this a strange new world, and to the smaller specialised audience whose knowledge can be appreciably enlarged by the sharply rewarding experience of these journeys into visual territories of the mind.

"Graham Sutherland": the artist in his studio.



Book Reviews

L. J. M. DAGUERRE—THE HISTORY OF THE DIORAMA AND THE DAGUERREOTYPE, by Helmut and Alison Gernsheim. Illustrated. (Secker and Warburg, 45s.)

THE CINEMA OWES a double debt to the energetic jack-of-many trades Louis Jacques Maude Daguerre. His Diorama was a step in the aesthetic evolution of the cinema, as essential as the Daguerreotype was in its technology. In many ways Daguerre's progress was inevitable. The sense of showmanship which led him to such a thorough appreciation and assimilation of the Romantic, and his gift for the curious artifices of *trompe l'oeil*, explain at once his remarkable popularity as a stage designer and the success of the Diorama. His skill at stage lighting and effect was such that a play, Frédéric's *Le Mineur d'Auberval* (1820), was "specially written so that Daguerre could devise a fog to fill the stage and then gradually disperse at sunrise". (Unfortunately, "the mechanism did not work properly and the effect was lost".)

Although Daguerre was not the inventor of the species, his Diorama was the slickest, most sophisticated and most successful of its kind. The arrangements (the auditorium, containing between two and three hundred people, was bodily revolved from one vast transformation picture to another) would not have disgraced Reinhardt at his showiest. In Paris the Diorama stayed open from 1822 to 1839: in London (Park Square East) it retained its popularity even longer, from 1823 to 1851, after which the building was converted into a Baptist Chapel. During this period, Daguerre's subjects evolved from Gothick picturesque to Victorian scenic views which were often oddly reminiscent of Lumière's first travel films.

His work in designing these Dioramas—the exacting detail of *trompe l'oeil* painting, the use of the *camera obscura* and *camera lucida*—explains fairly naturally his interest in photographic research. This book gives a detailed account of his relationship with Niépce, and goes far towards a final evaluation of each partner's contribution to the Daguerreotype. The Gernsheims have done more, perhaps, than any previous historians to give his due to the unfortunate Niépce, whose exact scientific researches considerably antedated Daguerre's hit-and-miss experiments. The account of their association is often comic. For a full three years the two corresponded, politely but suspiciously, each patently anxious to know how much the other had already discovered, but loath to reveal his own hand. Not until late 1829 was a formal agreement drawn up between them—the austere provincial being at last won over, apparently, when Daguerre flashed before him the artistic wonders of the Diorama. After Niépce's death in 1833, the story is continued with Daguerre's perfection of Niépce's processes, his gradual ousting from the limelight of Isidor, Niépce's son and successor in the partnership, his persistent jockeying to ensure the most profitable and flamboyant send-off for the new invention.

Daguerre was a marvellous publicist—particularly when he had someone like François Arago in his pocket—and the launching of the Daguerreotype was sensational. The campaign of "rumour and counter-rumour" which preceded the special joint meeting of the Académie des Sciences and the Académie des Beaux Arts (August 9, 1839) ensured the excitement and commotion which greeted the revelation of the process, turning the occasion into something of a national crisis. Persuaded by Arago, the French Government had bought the invention (by means of pensions to Daguerre and Isidor Niépce) to give freely to the whole world. Of the shady negotiations which nevertheless retained for Daguerre the sole British patent, and which resulted in twenty years of bitter squabbles and wrecked careers in this country, the authors give the fullest account yet published.

A great merit of the book is the light it throws on the personality

of Daguerre. He emerges as colourful, cocky, boastful; a bit common and none too high-principled, and always ready to announce his achievements well in advance of their realisation. At the same time he must have had considerable personal charm and quite remarkable application. The Daguerreotype was only achieved after fifteen years of persistent trial and error.

The Gernsheims' tenacity as researchers (which was crowned by their discovery of the world's first photograph, Niépce's first view from nature, made in 1826 and lost for over a century) is already well known through their *History of Photography*. Their final chapters on the Daguerreotype in France, America, Britain and the German-speaking countries, though sketchy in parts, still give the fullest account of the rapid spread of the invention. The many illustrations are excellent, leaving no doubt of the heights the Daguerreotype achieved in its short career, in the hands of artists like Southworth and Hawes of Boston, Claudet, Beard and Biow.

DAVID ROBINSON.

BABY DOLL, by Tennessee Williams. Illustrated. (Secker and Warburg, 12s 6d.)

TO QUOTE THE publishers' note, Tennessee Williams has here "welded into an original story two of his early one-act plays which were, roughly, concerned with the same characters and situation". The resulting script can certainly stand on its own; that is, as adult reading matter of a sort. The undertones of Mr. Williams' unappetising story are conveyed with a shrewd precision and economy. Dialogue flows on smoothly, accompanied with directions sufficiently detailed to go some distance towards establishing character: "His (Vacarro's) affability is not put on, but he has a way of darting glances right and left as he chuckles and drinks beer which indicates a certain watchfulness, a certain reserve". Or, of Archie Lee: "He is crouched over a section of broken plaster in the wall, enlarging a space between exposed boards with a penknife. Unshaven, black jowled, in sweaty pyjamas. On the bed table behind him is a half-empty bottle of liquor, an old alarm clock, ticking away, a magazine called *Spicy Fiction* and a tube of ointment".

It would be rash to generalise from this thoroughly thought-out script as to the method of partnership evolved between Williams and Kazan. So far as this film is concerned, the latter's contribution is first and foremost, one feels, an exercise in Actors' Studio methods applied to another man's story. That it comes off brilliantly need hardly be said again. Yet obviously the director's job was not just a matter of handling the players, however committed Kazan may feel towards the innermost impersonation. To this corresponds an unrelenting overall emphasis on the visual quality of the narrative. Hence those ingenious settings, over-dramatically lit, and serving a somewhat self-destructive purpose. I do not presume here, though, to rewrite Louis Marcorelles' review of the film.

To return to the written material. A few changes have been made during the transition from script to screen. Thus the scene in the doctor's office between Baby Doll and the young man is merely there as an indication in Williams' text. In the film it was developed into dialogue form, presumably as a further help to the spectator. Conversely, another scene has been deleted: Archie Lee, in the original, tries to threaten and bully Baby Doll into supporting his fake alibi. Such alterations, though, do not seem substantially to modify the film's impact, or even its narrative line and emphasis. More worthy of speculation are the two alternative endings. Kazan has in effect gone one step further by leaving Baby Doll alone with Aunt Rose, uncertain whether or not Vacarro will return to her. I say one step further because Tennessee Williams was content with a happy ending—of a sort. "Vacarro drops out of the tree and stands with arms lifted for Baby Doll". In this connection, it may perhaps be worth noting that, according to Americans who have seen them, the two original plays (*27 Wagons Full of Cotton* and *The Unsatisfactory Supper*) were tuned to black comedy. Well, let us speculate if we so wish.

But must we? There does not seem to me any attempt at setting the material in a truly felt perspective. And one may perhaps even wonder whether a certain complacency does not creep into this horrid naturalistic fable. Never are we compelled to stand up, while the characters lie down and Mr. Williams sits back. This, at least, is the final impression one spectator was left with. Although interesting in other respects, the published script in no way conveys a different level of interpretation.

JEAN QUEVAL.

PERIODICALS

THE PUBLICATION of a new British quarterly—*The Living Cinema*, produced by the Edinburgh Film Guild—gives Edinburgh the distinction of being the first festival directly associated with a magazine. Much of this first number is given up to a retrospective survey of the 1956 Festival, with a miscellany of shortish articles and reviews; and some of these—notably reviews of films such as *The King and I* and *Reach for the Sky*—have inevitably lost something in topicality. More generally interesting are a reprint of Charles Frend's British Film Academy Lecture, Basil Wright's note on Free Cinema, and Peter Brinson's comments on national styles in Eastern Europe. The new quarterly is available only by subscription, from Film House, 6-8 Hill Street, Edinburgh 2. It will be interesting to see how the editors intend to develop their policy, outlined as "an extension of the Festival in print".

Among foreign publications recently received, mention should be made of the first number of *Young Film*, published in English

and French by the Prague International Union of Students and the Czech School of Cinematography. Intended as a forum for young film makers, the journal stresses cultural and social aspects of the cinema. The February number of *Cahiers du Cinéma* is of more interest than of late, the most notable features being a script extract from Fellini's *Notti di Cabiria* and a note on his forthcoming adaptation of Tupino's book about the women's asylum at Magliano. An anonymous American correspondent also supplies some trenchant comments on production tendencies in Hollywood. The film reviews, however, generally maintain the tradition of *la politique d'auteur*, which is now losing its power to amuse. This malady has also begun to infect another French publication, *Cinéma 57*, though their special number on the animated film is informative and enterprising. The scenario of Dovzhenko's unfinished *Poem of the Sea* can be found in the first number of this year's *Iskusstvo Kino*, published in Moscow. From Switzerland, *Cine-Club* devotes an entire issue to a discussion of aspects of the work of D. W. Griffith.

Correspondence

"Stand Up! Stand Up!"

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—Lindsay Anderson's article in your Autumn number prompts me to ask this question. Why are there so few (so far as I am aware) films made which deal genuinely with industrial problems? Such films as there are seem to deal with these problems in a comic manner as though to avoid laying bare the realities of the true industrial situation.

Is this another application of Mr. Anderson's thesis? In other words, are we sub-consciously avoiding trying to put on the screen the elements of conflict which are, I believe, inevitable in industry? Indeed, the false liberalism, of which Mr. Anderson complains in other fields, has been apparent in writing on industrial relationships since the war.

This writing has talked in terms of the possibility of industrial harmony without adequately recognising the existence of various groups within the firm with differing and often conflicting interests. This somewhat superficial doctrine of industrial harmony has only served to confuse the cause of genuine liberalism; for what all of us in industry should really be doing is trying to obtain industrial co-operation on the basis of the genuine conflict of immediate interests which exists. This conflict is likely to be most difficult when its existence is least recognised. In fact, genuine co-operation and goodwill can come from a reconciliation of these interests, but never from attempts to ignore them.

It is high time that the cinema began to pay attention in a responsible and truthful manner to the human problems of industry.

Yours faithfully,

RICHARD O'BRIEN.

2 South Parade,
Wakefield.

SIR,—The main fault Mr. Taylor appears to find in "committed" film criticism is what he calls the "newsreel outlook". I can think of only one "committed" film in which this is apparent: in Antonioni's 'Attempted Suicide' section in *Amore in Città*. Here the director seeks to induce our sympathy with the characters shown by telling us beforehand that they are re-enacting the incidents leading up to their attempts at suicide. He fails, because he has relied on having told us, and not on involving us in the situation. This mistake Zavattini and Maselli in their episode, 'Caterina's Story', and De Sica in much of his work, do not make, because they rely "on the inherent strength of the material" sympathetically observed.

Mr. Taylor falls into an error similar in type to Antonioni's.

Though he writes "what the poem, or the film, says is how it says it", he continues, "for the aesthetic critic any subject or approach is permissible, since the vital factor is not what it means to him but what it means to the creator". Surely there must be a distinction between what the film is, and what it means to the creator, just as there is a distinction between what the film is, and the personal history of its participants. In other words, what the critic must look at is the film.

The tension upon which good criticism is based is not that between the film and its participants, or the film and its creator, but that between the widest experience and finest conceptions of the critic and the film. From such criticism Mr. Taylor seems to disqualify himself, for he makes no distinction (in his first letter) between "moral judgments"—the result of finest conceptions—and "personal, subjective tastes", and (in his second letter) between commitment—the application of moral judgments—and "personal prejudices".

If Mr. Taylor saw *Nuit et Brouillard*, the searing images of that film would show him the irrelevance of the type of aestheticism he is advocating and the necessity of commitment in life and art.

Yours faithfully,

P. F. MORGAN.

6 Doughty Street,
London, W.C.1.

SIR,—As a freelance journalist specialising in films and theatre, I'm grateful to Lindsay Anderson for tearing a flippant, cynical mask from the face of contemporary film journalism. Yet what he has revealed is still not the true face, but another deceptive evasion. Mr. Anderson effectively, and, as I see it, truthfully describes the current intellectual and political climate, with its sense of anti-climax, of boredom and lack of purpose. Indeed, much of the mock-seriousness and grim gaiety he detests in film criticism today is only a protection against this climate.

Armed against the weather with a tommy-gun instead of a brolly, Mr. Anderson goes out to do battle on behalf of us poor benighted intellectuals who are wandering about in a fog of indecision, too weak-willed, too scared, or too mercenary to do our own fighting. And who gets shot up? We do! The very people he is trying to save!

Though we are certainly to be criticised, as much as any other group of people, for the chicken-heartedness from which almost everyone suffers these days; though we cannot, any more than any other group of people, evade some responsibility for the climate, are we, in fact, the main enemy? Do we really deserve the treatment we get from Mr. Anderson? Will it do us any good?

To answer these questions, I must first of all say that I do not think any writing on films today in papers or periodicals (with, of course, the noble exception of *SIGHT AND SOUND*) can be dignified with the name of 'criticism'. And I include in this generalisation all the papers mentioned by Lindsay Anderson.

Even the best of us—the most intelligent, the most sensitive, the most committed—however you define 'best'—even the best of us cannot write with sufficient care and depth to be called critics. We are, in fact, commentators, gossip columnists, feature writers, gag-men, publicity men—journalists. And journalists are only as much to blame for the present wretched state of film 'criticism' as

workers in a factory are for the economic and social system we live in. No less, it is true. But no more.

To complain against critics and their 'criticism' is easy enough. To find them jobs where they would be able to write in a way of which Lindsay Anderson would approve is another. Some of my colleagues may enjoy being flippant and cynical. Even if they don't, they are forced, like any other worker, to give their employers what they want.

Nor is this done without protests. Protests are continually being made by working journalists through their professional organisations, like the National Union of Journalists and the Critics' Circle. By this means, journalists attempt to safeguard standards which are in great danger, even though they are already so low as to be minimal.

Newspapers, and most periodicals, are these days in every respect a part of show business. They have almost entirely lost any pretensions they may once have had to being taken 'seriously'. If they are serious, committed, balanced, they soon pay the penalty in loss of circulation. Lindsay Anderson very rightly draws attention to the deterioration in popular taste. For this the Press itself is in part responsible. But, in giving the public what it thinks the public ought to want, it is being hoist on its own petard and having to pander to the decadence it has helped create.

I am fortunate enough to write for a popular Sunday newspaper which has recently turned its back on the easy descent into Hell, and is attempting to provide its readers with a more mature and expert point of view on all matters. It will be interesting to see whether this brave new policy will meet with the wide public approval it deserves.

I do not wish it to be assumed that I am blaming the public for its film critics. This is not so—at least, not entirely. Nor am I blaming the critics. They are only supplying a demand, which they must do, or starve. The blame for the present state of affairs lies mostly with our leaders, and not least the pink-flaggers, who have led us into the dreary suburban impasse in which we all now exist so comfortably.

And therefore we can revitalise film criticism NOT by attacking the critics, but by increasing our own awareness of the human situation; by becoming active, not passive, readers of the papers (if we are the general public); by continued defence of standards through professional organisations (if we are journalists); and by being a little more perceptive, discriminating and generous (if we are Lindsay Anderson).

Yours faithfully,

FRANK JACKSON.

801 Endsleigh Court,
Upper Woburn Place,
London, W.C.1.

Hungarian Cinema

Sir,—Louis Marcorelles's article on Hungarian Cinema, *The Fight for Freedom*, makes most interesting reading since the October insurrection, and his knowledge of this subject is greater than mine; just the same, I should like to question some of his comments. He criticises *14 Lives in Danger* (known here as *Fourteen Lives Saved*), for introducing an imperturbable party official (I thought he was from the Ministry of Mines), puffing calmly at his pipe like Stalin in *The Fall of Berlin*. This, says Marcorelles, was an unconscious reversion to what he considers the style of the worst Soviet films of "the Stalinist era". Isn't this a bit unfair to a film that also gently and in a kindly way takes the rise out of an over-energetic girl leader of a Soviet engineering rescue team.

The incident of the Hungarians adding a different end to de Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* is new to me and I do not know the circumstances, but it does not appear as politically sinister as Marcorelles suggests; to the original ending of the father and son, reconciled, becoming lost in the crowd, it appears that the Hungarians have added a threatened march of unemployed, a symbol of struggles to come. Perhaps more serious is the fact that social conditions in Italy were such that any similar sort of ending would be commercially impossible for de Sica. De Sica faced the same problem with his ending to *Umberto D.*: after attempting suicide, the old pensioner realises he must go on living—but there is no hint of how he should struggle for a decent life.

English studios have hardly even attempted to deal with the subjects of unemployment and old age pensioners, and we can be supremely thankful to de Sica for tackling them with such mastery, but one can understand the Hungarians, having achieved a Socialist society, itching to make the conclusion of *Bicycle Thieves* nearer to their own experiences, for their struggles had wiped out un-

employment. As a life-long opponent of censorship I dislike the idea of a film-maker's work being tampered with and I suppose I am shocked at the Hungarian alteration of a de Sica masterpiece. However, the shock is tempered by admiration for the constructive way they have gone about it.

Italy's neo-realism profoundly affected Hungarian film-goers and film-makers, who have been stimulated to develop their own style of realism. When I was there last summer I also saw how some of the best realist pictures from India (themselves stimulated by the Italians), were receiving official encouragement. With films coming also from Britain, France, both East and West Germany, the USSR and other Socialist countries (but not from the USA), the Hungarian public had in many ways more freedom of choice than we do. The events of the past few months do not seem to have altered this freedom, as negotiations are going ahead for a quite considerable number of British pictures to be exhibited there.

Yours faithfully,

CHRISTOPHER BRUNEL.

First House,
Bulstrode Way,
Gerrards Cross, Bucks.

Actors' Studio

Sir,—Tony Richardson's article on the Actors' Studio is especially interesting to me. As stage manager for the original Broadway productions of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and as a film bit player in *On the Waterfront* (Father Vincent), I have had first-hand experience with many Studio actors, and the very great privilege of working with Elia Kazan under varied circumstances.

It strikes me that the most vivid personalities among the Studio crowd, as among any group of actors, are the ones who make their mark. Many of the most successful seem to violate basic principles of the so-called "Method". If there is a single, underlying fault in Studio players, it would seem to be their apparent inbred snobbishness for the audience; their insistence upon lowering an iron curtain between their own pleasures in playing, and the people out front. Like the Lunts, or Gypsy Rose Lee, or Gielgud or Bobby Clark (or any of the popular actors derided by Studio youngsters), the stars of the Studio are those who have broken the stereotype and who, by their own brilliance, outshining a "method", manage to light up the sky.

It might be added to Mr. Richardson's remarks that Joshua Logan, no subscriber to Studio activities, had *something* to do with Marilyn Monroe's *Bus Stop* performance. After all, he directed the movie!

Yours faithfully,

ROBERT DOWNING

Majestic Theatre,
245 W. 44th Street,
New York 36.

Back to the War

Sir,—John Gillett's review of the film *The Battle of the River Plate* raises a few points in relation to Walter Lassally's few comments in the Summer number on the present apathy of British film-makers and audiences.

The constant popularity of war films in this country today seems to signify a malaise as serious as existed in France (described by Paul Rotha in *The Film Till Now*) before and during the Second World War, and typified by *Harvest*, *Le Jour se Lève* and *Les Enfants du Paradis*, which he rightly described as unconsciously expressing an attitude of mind symptomatic of defeat, but hailed by the British and American critics as works of art.

The three most popular films at the box office in this country during 1956 were, according to the Press, *Reach for the Sky*, *Private's Progress* and *A Town Like Alice*, all of which were hailed to a greater or lesser extent by the national Press. They are not of course as brilliantly acted and photographed as the French productions, but their continued existence is, as your reviewer remarks, evidence that in this country the public is looking back to the war as our finest hour, rather than face the fact that today our world influence appears to be in decline.

The greatest period of British film production was of course during the Second World War. Is it too extreme to suggest that our producers today are automatically reverting to the war period, in the same way that the French reverted to the "Art" film in the Occupation period and before?

Yours faithfully,

MARGARET BARKER.

12 St. Ronan's Road,
Reading.

A Georgian Film

Sir,—There's something untrue about *Magdana's Donkey* in Festival Reports written by John Maddison in the Autumn number of SIGHT AND SOUND.

The film neither is Russian, nor Z. Harshiladze is the director. Really *Magdana's Donkey* is a Georgian film, made originally in the Georgian language and directed by T. Abuladze and R. Chkheidze, two young directors of Tbilisi Studio. Mr. Z. Harshiladze is assistant-director.

Yours faithfully,
G. GIGOLASHVILI,
Manager, Grusia Film Studio.

Tbilisi,
U.S.S.R.

Will Hay

Sir,—I am compiling a short, critical survey of the films of Will Hay, and should be most grateful if any readers of SIGHT AND SOUND could help by lending biographical material, news cuttings, reviews, articles, photographs, letters, and personal reminiscences.

All loans would be acknowledged, and materials copied and quickly returned.

Yours faithfully,
COLIN SMITH.

Ventura,
Willingham Road,
Market Rasen,
Lincs.

Back Numbers

Sir,—I have for disposal a collection of film periodicals covering approximately the years 1950-55. SIGHT AND SOUND is complete for 1952, 1953, 1955; a few copies are missing from the other years. *Monthly Film Bulletin* is complete from March 1950 to March 1956 except for three numbers. There are six numbers of *Sequence* and ten of *Films and Filming*: details on request. If anyone cared to make an offer for the lot, I should be glad to throw in a practically complete set of *Critic's Choice*, some Edinburgh Festival annotated programmes, etc.; but offers for separate items would also be welcome.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT I. BROWN.

43 Prince Street,
Peterhead, Aberdeen.

Sherwood Anderson

Sir,—For Lindsay Anderson to bleat for more enlightened criticism in one issue of SIGHT AND SOUND and then in the following one gleefully recount his experience as director of the *Robin Hood* serials, which honestly defy all serious attempts at any sort of criticism, is to my mind a betrayal of all the things he professes to hold dear . . .

Yours faithfully,
M. P. BURROWS.

124 Elmsleigh Drive,
Leigh-on-Sea,
Essex.

Mr. Burrows' comment can perhaps most easily be answered with three quotations from Mr. Lindsay Anderson's article: (1) "this kind of schizophrenia is one of the first things one learns to live with"; (2) "the critical, film-appreciative half of one's personality has plenty that it can profitably note"; (3) "a unit is a good thing to be part of".
—EDITOR.

"Britain in America"

We have been informed by the Rank Organisation that there are two misstatements in the article "Britain in America", published in the Winter number of SIGHT AND SOUND. A sentence in the article stated that: "Barring an abortive attempt shortly after the war to distribute films in the U.S. themselves, the Rank Organisation have generally sold their films to American distributors for a flat sum". The first part of this sentence referred to the lease of several New York cinemas in 1947 (and the plan to lease a total of 50 cinemas), to provide "shop windows" for British films. The Rank Organisation do not, however, regard this as an "attempt at distribution", since the films shown in these cinemas were handled by American distribution companies. We are also informed that distribution "has never been on a flat rate basis but on an agreed percentage basis". We regret this misinterpretation of the Rank Organisation's position *vis à vis* the American distribution companies, and apologise for any misunderstanding it may have caused.

HAROLD LEONARD

A correspondent writes:

A MAGAZINE MAY be the wrong place to say this, but it often seems that not all the creative film minds are making films. Such a creative person as Harold Leonard usually has to die before we try to estimate his value, for this was a value to be measured by no film that he made, by no script that was filmed; it was a value of his own, stimulated into an apparently limitless energy by works of originality and beauty to find an audience for those works. And Harold turned all his talents—critical perception, an almost childlike eagerness, infectious excitement—into this campaign that ended only with his death on November 10, 1956, a month before his 48th birthday.

He wrote for SIGHT AND SOUND for more than ten years, and for most of this time as Hollywood correspondent, yet he was never content to send bare news: there was always a young director to be encouraged, a new country to be looked at, a new producing organisation whose films might not go beyond the city limits without a little extra prodding. Perhaps *prodding* is the most exact term for Harold Leonard's invented, individual profession—prodding good films into being, prodding the audiences of one country to look at the films of another, prodding viewers to prod their theatres to show works that were overlooked or obscured or forgotten.

Before Harold became a contributor to SIGHT AND SOUND, we knew him as responsible for a work that has become so used and needed a reference book that one tends to forget that it, too, had to be written before it could be published. *The Film Index* was the first volume of a projected series assigned to a group of

research-writers of the Federal Writers Project, WPA, and placed under the direction of Harold Leonard. His degrees at the Universities of Minnesota and Harvard gave him the authority for the post, and ten years of hovering about the edges of the film industry (including assistance with the anti-industrial Watson's *Fall of the House of Usher*) gave him the enthusiasm and information to engineer such a monument of film history.

That first and only volume of the series appeared in 1941; the files in preparation for the others were deposited at the Museum of Modern Art. Circumstances and health took Harold Leonard away from academic and studio worlds until his last year, when he returned to the classroom to teach the History of the Motion Picture at the University of California at Los Angeles. On this campus he organised the first American festival of modern Japanese films—a fully satisfying success as his last public act. When he died he was organising two equally ambitious festivals: one of Asian films, and one of international films of importance buried by commercial neglect.

None but intimates knew of his physical handicaps these past ten years: a heart that refused to go, that had to be cajoled, over and over, to function again; a cancer that took first a leg and then him. An old school friend wrote: "Real achievement should be measured not by the situation in which one finds oneself, but by the way one meets that situation. And I can honestly say that I know of no personal achievement which seems to me more admirable than Harold's courage in surmounting his troubles." A Japanese correspondent, the last to hear from him, said, "His death is the big loss to the Japanese film world". His death is the big loss to all of us.

(*LA TERRA TREMA* continued from page 216)

to have accorded with the temperament of his interpreters, their restraint and *pudeur* seem to come naturally to them. While the performances remain extraordinary, they clearly stem from the players' own experience and understanding of life. Helping to write their own dialogue, in the rough but melodious Sicilian dialect, they have also found in it an authentic poetry.

La Terra Trema's claim to greatness finally lies in its wonderful integration of form and content. Its theme, the lesson that experience teaches 'Ntoni, is grafted on to reality, and finds in reality its actual and historical justification. The form of the film is wholly directed towards the exaltation of man, of his pride and courage. The faces and everyday objects, for which Visconti finds so exact a place in the structure of his scenes, are there because of the value he attaches to them. The emotion that he so carefully restrains runs strongly beneath the surface of the action: it is only on leaving the cinema that we realise how deeply we have been moved. And the marvellous face of 'Ntoni reflects the desire to live, and to live justly, that is the essential spirit of the film. He is one of those characters who illuminate the history of the cinema.

With *Ossessione*, Visconti had shattered the traditions and customs of the Italian cinema, given it the violent jolt that turned it towards neo-realism. With *La Terra Trema* he gave the neo-realist cinema its most finished and one of its most influential works. To conclude, we may hope that Visconti may one day find it possible to film the other two episodes of *La Terra Trema*, to complete this great and noble work in the way he originally intended.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Stills:
PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *Funny Face*, *The Rainmaker*, *The Ten Commandments*.
METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER for *Lust for Life*, *The Teahouse of the August Moon*, *Hot Summer Night*.
COLUMBIA PICTURES for *The Admirable Crichton*, *The Member of the Wedding*, *Don't Knock the Rock*.
UNITED ARTISTS for *The Pride and the Passion*, *Around the World in 80 Days*.
20th CENTURY-FOX for *Anastasia*.
WARNER BROTHERS for *The Wrong Man*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*.
BRITISH LION for *Brothers in Law*, *Lucky Jim*.
GALA FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Is Anna Anderson Anastasia?*
CONTEMPORARY FILMS for *Munna*.
NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE for *La Terra Trema*.
UNIFRANCE for *Mon Oncle*.
UNITED NATIONS for *Out*.
BBC TELEVISION for *John Piper*, *Graham Sutherland*.
PROCINEX for *A propos d'un Rivière*.
GOVT. OF WEST BENGAL for *Pather Panchali*.
MINERVA MOVIE TONES for *Jhansi Ki Rani*.
SATYAJIT RAY for *Aprajita*.
TOHO for *Throne of Blood*.
VICTOR GOLLANCZ, LTD. for picture of Colin Wilson.
CHATTO AND WINDUS for picture of Iris Murdoch.
SECKER AND WARBURG for picture of John Wain.
UNIVERSAL PICTORIAL PRESS for picture of Peter Rawlinson, M.P.
THE OBSERVER for picture of Kenneth Tynan.
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A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films likely to be of special interest to *SIGHT AND SOUND* readers are denoted by one, two or three stars.

***ANASTASIA** (Fox) Romanticised version of the Anastasia legend, adapted from the play: good stage carpentry and smoothly urbane playing and direction. *Reviewed.* (Ingrid Bergman, Yul Brynner, Helen Hayes; director, Anatole Litvak. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

ATTILA THE HUN (Archway) Lavish but mainly tasteless spectacle dealing with Attila's march on Rome. A kind of Italian *Zarak*, in fact, with an unassailable Sophia Loren and a brutish Attila from Anthony Quinn. (Director, Pietro Francisci; Technicolor.)

BARRETT'S OF WIMPOLE STREET, THE (M-G-M) Defiantly old-fashioned revival of Rudolf Besier's melodramatic piece of Victoriana. Chilly playing by John Gielgud and a rather robust Elizabeth Barrett by Jennifer Jones. (Bill Travers; director, Sidney Franklin. CinemaScope, Metrocolor.)

***BROTHERS IN LAW** (British Lion) Exploration of the hazards of a legal career, with some amiably absurd court-scenes. Played and written with tireless good-humour. *Reviewed.* (Ian Carmichael, Richard Attenborough. Terry-Thomas; director, Roy Boulting.)

***CINERAMA HOLIDAY** (Cinerama Productions) Nothing here is as impressive as the celebrated aeroplane tour in *This is Cinerama*, but the extended large-screen travelogue has its striking and effective episodes. (Directors, Robert Bendick, Philippe de Lacey. Technicolor.)

CROWDED PARADISE (Exclusive) Independently made American feature concerning social problems among New York's Puerto Rican community. Good intentions shade off into some heavy and lurid melodramatics. (Hume Cronyn, Nancy Kelly, Frank Silvera; director, Fred Pressburger.)

DOCTOR AT LARGE (JAFID) More medical junketings, with some ripe jokes and a host of familiar character players. Mainly the mixture as before. (Dirk Bogarde, Muriel Pavlow, Donald Sinden; director, Ralph Thomas. VistaVision, Eastman Colour.)

***FANTASIA** (Walt Disney) Reissue of Disney's controversial attempt to animate the classics, presented this time in SuperScope and with its original stereophonic sound tracks. (Music played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Stokowski. Technicolor.)

FOLIES-BERGERE (Films de France) Uneasy French try at an American-style musical, with over-dressed chorus girls and an undernourished script. Zizi Jeanmaire's sexy numbers and agile dancing are compensating factors. (Eddie Constantine, Nadia Gray; director, Henri Decoin. Technicolor.)

FORTUNE IS A WOMAN (Columbia) Insurance detective Jack Hawkins investigates Arlene Dahl and the false claim made by her husband. Mild melodrama with a neat comedy performance by Bernard Miles. (Dennis Price; director, Sidney Gilliat.)

****FUNNY FACE** (Paramount) Americans in Paris in a thoroughly engaging musical. Plenty of charm, humour and invention and a fine collection of Gershwin numbers. (Fred Astaire, Audrey Hepburn, Kay Thompson; director, Stanley Donen. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

GAS-OIL (JAFID) Further melodramatic insight into the hazardous life of French lorry drivers. Shades of *Rififi*, *Wages of Fear*, etc., but lacking in grip and tension. (Jean Gabin, Jeanne Moreau; director, Gilles Grangier.)

****GIANT** (Warners) George Stevens' outsize screen version of Edna Ferber's novel about Texas. A very solid piece of film-making, with many elements of the conventional Hollywood "epic" but some outstanding qualities. (Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor, James Dean. WarnerColor.)

GOOD COMPANIONS, THE (A.B.-Pathé) J. B. Priestley's novel about a provincial touring company brought rather uneasily up to date and tricked out with American-style production numbers. (Eric Portman, Celia Johnson, Janette Scott; director, J. Lee-Thompson. CinemaScope, Technicolor.)

HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, THE (JAFID) Grisly remake of the Hugo story, dubbed into painful American and presented with a startling lack of zest or conviction. (Gina Lollobrigida, Anthony Quinn; director, Jean Delannoy. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

IS ANNA ANDERSON ANASTASIA? (Gala) German version of the Anastasia story, based on documents produced in court by Mrs. Anna Anderson. Intriguing material, rather drab and gloomily reconstructed. *Reviewed.* (Lilli Palmer, Ivan Desny; director, Falk Harnack.)

JAMES BROTHERS, THE (Fox) Determinedly violent retelling of the old Western legend, handicapped by a confused script construction and some ragged playing. (Robert Wagner, Jeffrey Hunter, Agnes Moorehead; director, Nicholas Ray. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

JULIE (M-G-M) Wildly extravagant melodrama with an air hostess on the run from her homicidal, psychopathic concert pianist husband. Dialogue never makes the mistake of letting a good cliché get away. (Doris Day, Louis Jourdan, Barry Sullivan; director, Andrew Stone.)

KISMET (M-G-M) Version of the stage musical, with numbers adapted from Borodin. Dolores Gray is in form as the pride of the Wazir's harem, but otherwise the film is inclined to sink under a heavy load of pseudo-Eastern paraphernalia. (Howard Keel, Ann Blyth; director, Vincente Minnelli. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

***LUST FOR LIFE** (M-G-M) Conscientious but unilluminating biographical study of Van Gogh, shot partly in Europe and variably played by an Anglo-American cast. *Reviewed.* (Kirk Douglas, Anthony Quinn; director, Vincente Minnelli. CinemaScope, Metrocolor.)

MISTER CORY (JAFID) Tony Curtis goes from slum kid to big gambling operator in a drama of slick motives and mainly unpleasant people. Sophisticated novelette, but nicely played. (Martha Hyer, Charles Bickford; director, Blake Edwards. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

***RAINMAKER, THE** (Paramount) Romantic comedy about a confidence trickster, an emotionally dried up spinster and a Kansas drought. Stagily done, with a good deal of sham poetry and one or two striking moments from Katharine Hepburn. (Burt Lancaster, Wendell Corey; director, Joseph Anthony. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

ROCK, PRETTY BABY (JAFID) The great contemporary gap between problem son and problem father is closed when both are able to love the strains of rock 'n' roll. Naïve entry in the rock 'n' roll stakes. (John Saxon, Luana Patten, Sal Mineo; director, Richard Bartlett.)

SCANDAL IN SORRENTO (Gala) Third film in the *Pane, Amore . . .* series, with Sophia Loren substituting for Lollobrigida. Cheerful in parts, but the formula is wearing a bit thin. (Vittorio de Sica, Lea Padovani; director, Dino Risi. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

***SECRET PLACE, THE** (JAFID) First film by a new young British production team; a fairly conventional crime and chase story, told with enterprise and some effective use of East End locations. (Belinda Lee, Ronald Lewis; director, Clive Donner.)

SEVEN WAVES AWAY (Columbia) Tough shipwreck story, with ship's officer deciding which of the lifeboat's crew to abandon so that others may survive. Water-logged script and characterisation, some dramatic tension. (Tyrone Power, Mai Zetterling; director, Richard Sale.)

***TEAHOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON, THE** (M-G-M) A slight comedy of the Americans in Okinawa, played too hard for consistent fun but with Brando superb as the Okinawan interpreter. *Reviewed.* (Glenn Ford, Machiko Kyo; director, Daniel Mann. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

****TRAVERSE DE PARIS, LA** (Films de France) Marcel Aymé's savagely ironic study of two black marketeers in wartime Paris. Some brutal sidelights on the Occupation mentality, and some glib evasions. *Reviewed.* (Jean Gabin, Bourvil; director, Claude Autant-Lara.)

TRUE AS A TURTLE (JAFID) Comedy about a yachting honeymoon, with mainly predictable maritime hazards. A long way after *Genevieve*. (John Gregson, June Thorburn, Cecil Parker; director, Wendy Toye. Eastman Colour.)

***WAR AND PEACE** (A.B.-Pathé) Italian-produced, American-directed, internationally-cast adaptation of Tolstoy. Some impressive spectacle in the second half, but the novel not unexpectedly defies translation. (Audrey Hepburn, Henry Fonda, Mel Ferrer; director, King Vidor. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

WINGS OF EAGLES (M-G-M) An American *Reach for the Sky*, with John Wayne as a crippled air-ace who dedicates his life to pioneering the aircraft carrier. John Ford's handling is rowdy rather than rousing. (Maureen O'Hara, Dan Dailey. Metrocolor.)

***YANGTSE INCIDENT** (British Lion) Documentary-style reconstruction of the escape of H.M.S. *Amethyst* down the Yangtze in 1949. Closely detailed action; reasonable characterisation in British service tradition. *Reviewed.* (Richard Todd, William Hartnell, Akim Tamiroff; director, Michael Anderson.)

***YOUNG STRANGER, THE** (RKO) Story of adolescent tensions and neglected parental responsibilities. Good playing by James MacArthur as another rebel without a cause and some sympathetic writing. *Reviewed.* (Kim Hunter, James Daly; director, John Frankenheimer.)

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